



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

### Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

### About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>



*bio*

REESE LIBRARY

OF THE

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA.

Received

*May*

188

*452*

Accessions No. *24794*

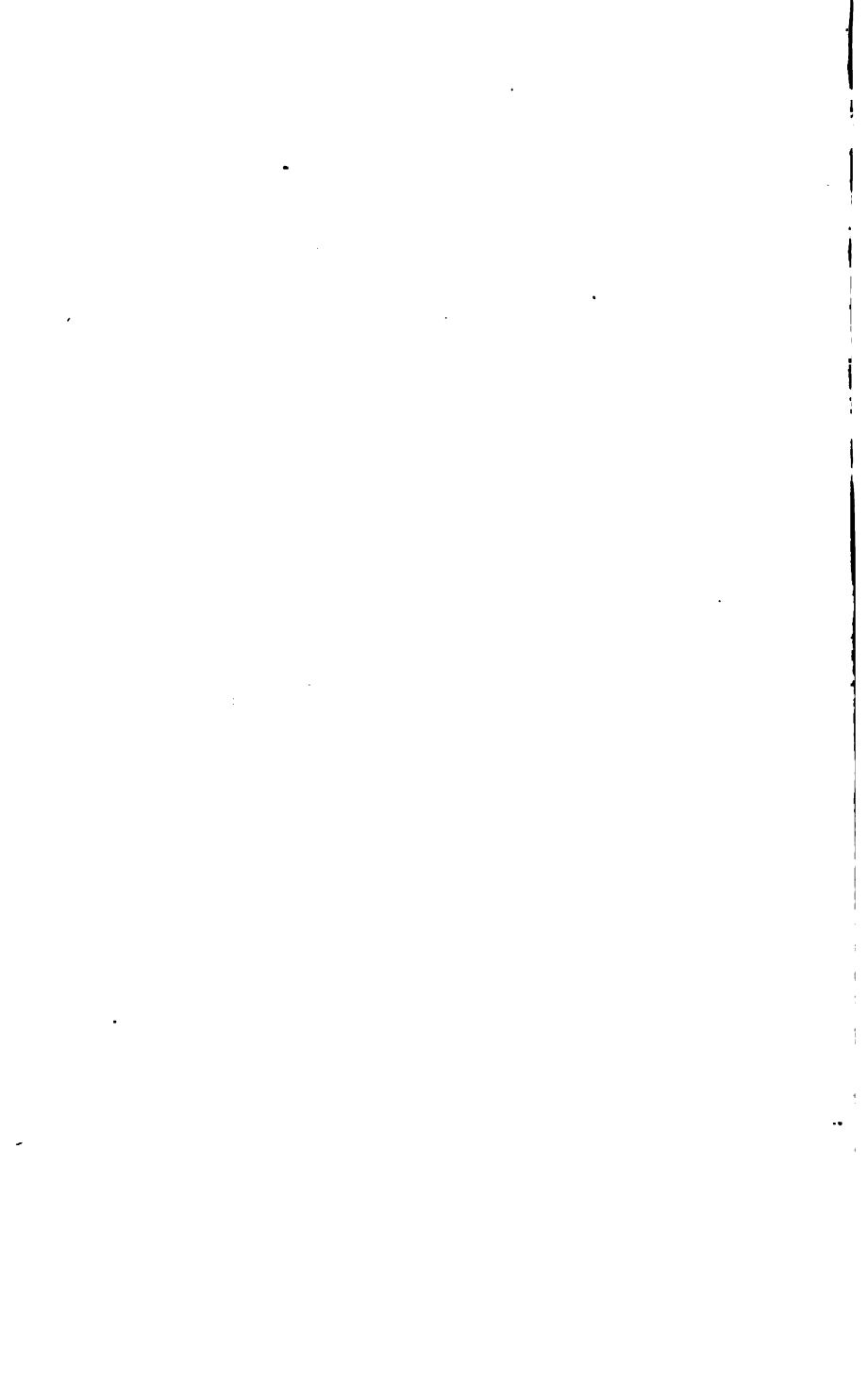
Shelf No.

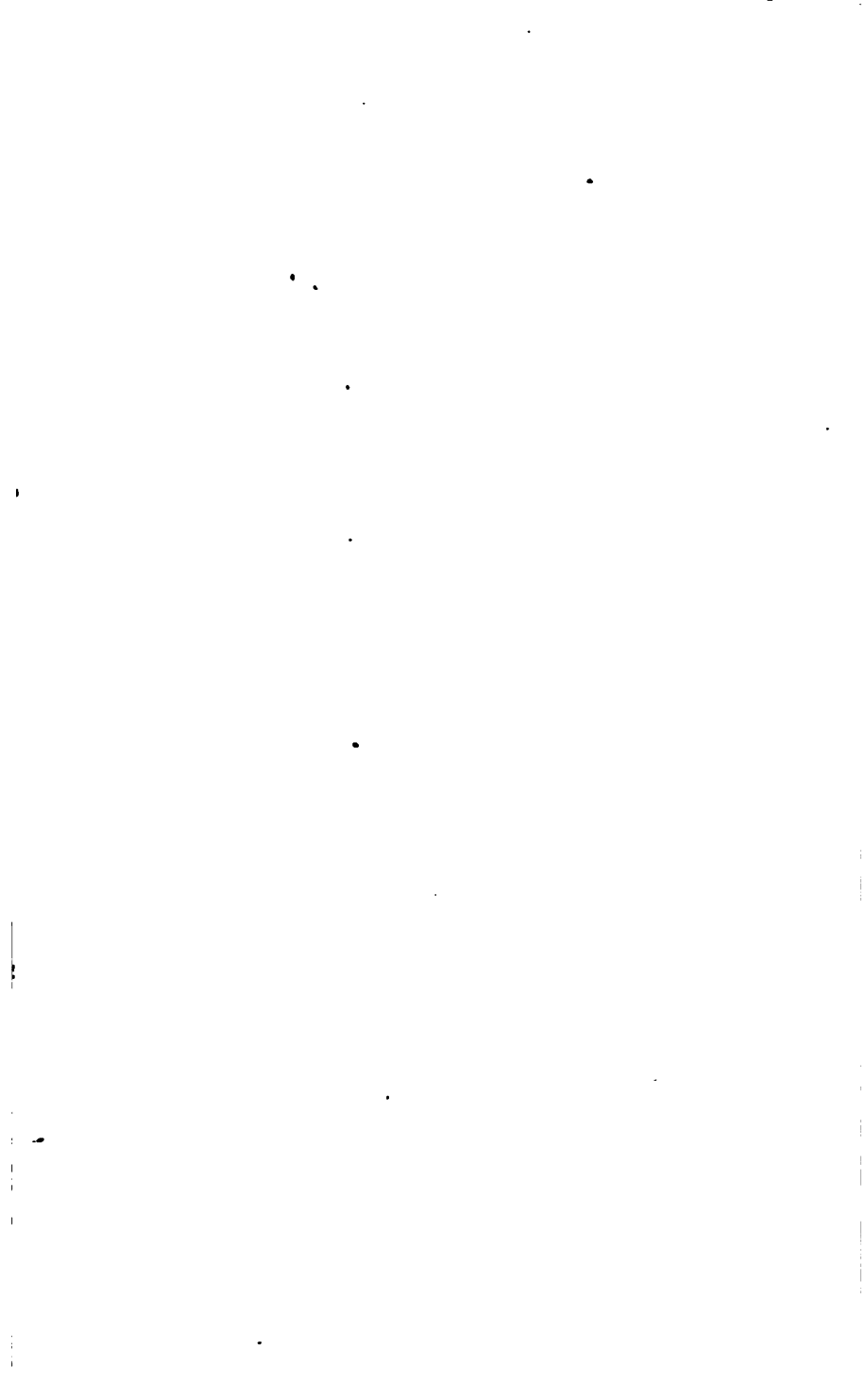
*5*

*li*

Rev. Henry Durant  
with the request of  
M. M. M. M. M.









THE  
LIFE AND CORRESPONDENCE  
OF  
JOHN FOSTER:

EDITED BY  
J. E. RYLAND.

WITH NOTICES OF MR. FOSTER AS A PREACHER AND A COMPANION,

BY JOHN SHARPARD,

AUTHOR OF "THOUGHTS ON DEVOTION," ETC., ETC.

IN TWO VOLUMES.



NEW YORK:

WILEY & PUTNAM, 161 BROADWAY.

---

1846.

952  
F755  
Q

2479K

R. CRANEHEAD'S Power Press,  
112 Fulton Street.

T. B. SMITH, Stereotyper  
216 William Street.

## P R E F A C E.

---

It will gratify the readers of these volumes to find that the Memoir is chiefly compiled from Mr. Foster's Letters; so numerous, happily, are the references to himself and the subjects in which he took the deepest interest, that little more than a proper selection and arrangement has been requisite, in order to form them into a continuous narrative. A biography drawn from such sources will be found, probably, to present a more vivid and truthful exhibition of character, than even a record, by a self-observer, however faithfully intended, if composed after the lapse of years, when the events, and the emotions they called forth, have begun to fade upon the memory.

The sentiments of affectionate veneration cherished from early years towards the subject of this Memoir, would preclude on the part of the Editor, even were his abilities equal to the task, any attempt at a critical analysis of character. What he has aimed at accomplishing has been, to select from the materials placed at his disposal, whatever would best illustrate the intellectual and moral qualities, the principles and opinions, of so distinguished a man. He has not consciously allowed the representation to be moulded into a conformity to his own views or convictions, either by omission on the one hand, or on the other by giving greater prominence to any class of sentiments than the place they occupied in Mr. Foster's estimation would justify. In a life so retired, and for the most part devoid of incident, a recurrence of similar trains of thought might be expected. For this reason many passages in the

correspondence have been omitted which individually would have been as worthy of preservation as those that are retained ; if still something like reiteration should be found, the Editor trusts that it is not to an immoderate extent, not to say that, within certain limits, it will serve to show more distinctly the writer's mental habits,—what were his most accustomed channels of thought.

For the particulars relating to Mr. Foster's youth, the Editor is indebted to his only surviving friend of that period, Mr. Horsfall, and to the descendants of his tutor, Dr. Fawcett. Use also has been made of a paper in Mr. Foster's handwriting—"Hints and Questions respecting my early History :"—unfortunately it is very brief, and breaks off abruptly.

In two instances the Editor has deviated from his first intention of inserting nothing in these volumes which had been already published by the Author, namely, the Letters on the Church, and those on the Ballot ; he was led to do so from the consideration, that these productions having only appeared in a public journal upwards of ten years ago, must be new to many readers—that they contain Mr. Foster's deliberate sentiments on subjects of great social interest—and that the miscellaneous character of the correspondence seemed to render their insertion in it more suitable than a republication with any of his other works. \*

On one point only of dogmatic theology Mr. Foster dissented from the religious community with which he was most intimately connected. Allusions to this subject (the Duration of Future Punishment) occur in two or three passages of his

\* It may here be mentioned that the Reflections on Death (vol. i , p. 52), and the Letters to Mr. Hughes (ii., 155), Dr. Carpenter (ii , 157), Dr. Liefchild (ii., 161), and Mrs. H. More (ii , 191), are reprinted from the publications in which they first appeared. The Letter to an Unknown Lady (i., 78) had also been previously printed for private circulation ; while this sheet was passing through the press, the Editor received information that her name was *Carpenter*.

early correspondence; but it is discussed at some length in a letter to a young minister, written in 1841 (vol. ii., p. 262). Without offering an opinion on "the moral argument," which to a mind of so high an order carried irresistible force, or inquiring what exceptions may be taken to those views of mankind and the present life to which it may appear that that argument owes much of its cogency—and while those who differ from him, and not a few, probably, who would assent to his views, may regret that the statements of Scripture are not more fully discussed—it may be permitted, in justice to his memory, to remark, that in Mr. Foster's mind, as is evident from his other writings, this belief was associated with the holiest views of the Divine being, and with a most elevated standard of moral excellence; nor among those who deem him mistaken on this subject, could any one be found who would more earnestly deprecate that a theological speculation should occupy the thoughts to the neglect of practical, personal piety. (LUKE xiii., 23, 24.)

In conclusion, the Editor's warmest thanks are presented to those friends of Mr. Foster (or their representatives) to whom the letters in these volumes are addressed. His acknowledgments are especially due to Mr. Cottle for the memoir of Miss Saunders with the accompanying letters, and for the introductory notice of his interesting and lamented relative. He would also express his obligations to the President of Cheshunt College for permission to insert the long and valuable letter on missionary undertakings (vol. ii., p. 276), and for the observations on some passages written (as might be anticipated) in a spirit of respectful and candid criticism.

*Northampton, May 15, 1846.*





# CONTENTS.

---

## CHAPTER I.

	PAGE
Parentage and Birth—Early Character and Occupations—Brearley Hall—Bristol—(1770—1792) . . . . .	1

## LETTERS.

1. To the Rev. Dr. Fawcett. First impressions of Bristol—Mr. Hughes—Hannah More . . . . .	10
2. To Mr. H. Horsfall. The improvement of time—Cultivation of personal piety . . . . .	12
3. To the Rev. Dr. Fawcett—on the same subject . . . . .	13
4. To Mr. H. Horsfall. An apology for silence—Oration on sensibi- lity . . . . .	15
5. To Mr. H. Horsfall . . . . .	16
6. To the Rev. Dr. Fawcett . . . . .	17
7. To Mr. H. Horsfall . . . . .	19
8. To Mr. H. Horsfall . . . . .	20
9. To the Managers of the Baptist College . . . . .	21

## CHAPTER II.

Newcastle-on-Tyne—Ireland—Return to Yorkshire (1792—1796) . . . . .	22
Journal of three days at Dublin . . . . .	28

## LETTERS.

10. To Mr. H. Horsfall . . . . .	32
11. To Mr. H. Horsfall . . . . .	32
12. To Mr. H. Horsfall . . . . .	33
13. To Mr. H. Horsfall. Description of Newcastle-on-Tyne—the Baptist Meeting-house . . . . .	34
14. To Mr. H. Horsfall . . . . .	35
15. To Mr. H. Horsfall . . . . .	37
16. To Mr. H. Horsfall . . . . .	38
17. To Mr. H. Horsfall . . . . .	39
18. To the Rev. Thomas Langdon. French Revolution . . . . .	40
19. To the Rev. Thomas Langdon. Literary schemes . . . . .	40
Sentiments on church-membership . . . . .	41
On friendship and personal reserve . . . . .	42
Political opinions . . . . .	43

## CHAPTER III.

	PAGE
Chichester—Battersea—Downend—Literary pursuits—Essay on the Greatness of Man—Journal—Letters on the Metropolis—(1797—1803)	45

## LETTERS.

20. To his Parents. Reflections on Death (note)	51
21. To his Parents	55
22. To his Parents	58
23. To his Parents	59
24. To his Parents. The necessarian scheme	61
25. To the Rev. Joseph Hughes	63
26. To the Rev. Joseph Hughes. Pulpit elocution	65
27. To his Parents	66
28. To an unknown Lady. On intellectual and moral excellence	68
29. To the Rev. Joseph Hughes. Disclosure of his religious views and experience	73
30. To an unknown Lady. On the death of a relative	78
31. To Mrs. R. Mant	81
32. To Mrs. R. Mant	82
33. To the Rev. Dr. Fawcett	83
34. To Mrs. R. Mant	86
35. To the Rev. Joseph Hughes	87
36. To the Rev. Dr. Ryland. Remarks on a sermon	91
37. To the Rev. Joseph Hughes. Coleridge and Hall	93
38. To Mrs. R. Mant. On friendship	94
39. To Mrs. R. Mant. Consolatory suggestions on the want of congenial society	95
40. To Mrs. R. Mant. Recollections of Chichester	96
41. To Mrs. R. Mant	99
Essay on the Greatness of Man	101
Extracts from Mr. Foster's Journal	108
42. To Miss Maria Snooke (On the Metropolis, No. 1)	156
43. To Miss M. Snooke. (No. 2)	162
44. To Miss M. Snooke. (No. 3)	165
45. To Miss M. Snooke. (No. 4)	170

## CHAPTER IV.

Removal to Frome—Publication of the Essays—Eclectic Review—Marriage (1804—1808)	176
---	-----

## LETTERS

46. To Mrs. Gowing	193
47. To Mrs. R. Mant	193
48. To Miss M. Snooke. (Introductory Letter to the Essays)	195
49. To the Rev. Joseph Hughes	199
50. To the Rev. Joseph Hughes. Criticisms on the Essays	201

	PAGE
51. To the Rev. Joseph Hughes . . . . .	203
52. To the Rev. Joseph Hughes. Criticisms on the Essays . . . . .	204
53. To Mrs. R. Mant . . . . .	207
54. To the Rev. John Fawcett. Review of early life. Remarks on Books; Gibbon's History, Baxter's Life, Leslie's Works—Authorship . . . . .	209
55. To Mrs. Gowing . . . . .	212
56. To the Rev. Dr. Ryland . . . . .	214
57. To Mrs. Gowing . . . . .	215
58. To the Rev. Joseph Hughes . . . . .	216
59. To Mrs. R. Mant. Natural scenery . . . . .	219
60. To D. Parken, Esq. Forbes's Life of Beattie . . . . .	220
61. To the Rev. Joseph Hughes . . . . .	224
62. To the Rev. Joseph Hughes. Edinburgh Review . . . . .	225
63. To Joseph Cottle, Esq. (in answer to an invitation to meet S. T. Coleridge) . . . . .	225
64. To Mrs. R. Mant . . . . .	227
65. To the Rev. Joseph Hughes . . . . .	227
66. To the Rev. Joseph Hughes . . . . .	228
67. To Miss B——. Coleridge's Lectures . . . . .	229
68. To the Rev. Joseph Hughes. Anticipations of marriage . . . . .	231
Miscellaneous observations, facts, suggestions, &c., written during Mr. Foster's residence at Frome . . . . .	231

## CHAPTER V.

Residence at Bourton-on-the-Water—Visit to Frome—Eclectic Review—Birth of his Son—Excursion into North Wales—Visit to Bristol and Frome—Hall's preaching—Death of his Parents—Domestic Habits—Removal to Downend (1808—1817) . . . . .	242—258
--	---------

## LETTERS.

69. To Mrs. John Sheppard . . . . .	258
70. To D. Parken, Esq. Fox's History—Death of Argyle—Edinburgh Review on Cevallos—Political abuses—Spanish war . . . . .	259
71. To D. Parken, Esq. Political views of Walker and Gilbert Wakefield—Cobbett and Burdett—Duty of exposing abuses and asserting liberal principles—The House of Commons, what it is not . . . . .	260
72. To the Rev. Joseph Hughes. Invitation to Bourton—Apology for silence—Hall's Review of Zeal without Innovation . . . . .	263
<i>Note.</i> Part of a letter from Mr. Hughes to Mr. Foster . . . . .	264
73. To D. Parken, Esq. Rose's remarks on Fox's History—Hall's composition—Hooker and Jeremy Taylor . . . . .	266
74. To the Rev. Joseph Hughes. The great theological writers of the seventeenth century—Effect of reading their works—Advantages of reviewing . . . . .	267
75. To D. Parken, Esq. Suitable training for critics—Coleridge's Poems—Jeremy Taylor . . . . .	268

	PAGE
76. To D. Parken. On theatrical representations . . . . .	269
77. To Walter Sheppard, Esq. Consolatory suggestions . . . . .	270
78. To the Rev. John Fawcett. Recollections of ancient friendship— Mr. Foster's parents—Reviewing—Hall's review of Crabbe's Poems . . . . .	271
79. To D. Parken, Esq. Quarterly Review on Spanish affairs—Sou they's review on missions—Eclectic review of Hannah More— New Annual Register on the French Revolution . . . . .	273
80. To D. Parken, Esq. On the phrase "gnashing of teeth"—Refer- ences to the Evil Spirit—Coleridge's "Friend"—The "four supporters" of the Eclectic Review in great peril—by whom and how rescued . . . . .	274
81. To the Rev. Joseph Hughes. Effect of a recluse life—Domestic happiness—Mr. Foster's parents . . . . .	275
82. To the Rev. Joseph Hughes. Accountability for the right use of talents . . . . .	276
83. To the Rev. Joseph Hughes. Mr. Foster's son—Preaching at Winchcomb, and new meeting-house—Cultivation of personal religion aided by preaching—Studies . . . . .	277
84. To John Sheppard, Esq. One <i>best possible</i> state of character and plan of action for every man—Power to its very last particle is <i>duty</i> . . . . .	278
85. To D. Parken, Esq. On the legal profession compared with devo- tedness to the moral and spiritual improvement of mankind— Fuller—Hall . . . . .	279
86. To D. Parken, Esq. The legal profession unfavorable to political independence and to exalted integrity . . . . .	280
87. To the Rev. Dr. Ryland. Translation of oriental works, by the Serampore missionaries—Their absolute value—Dr. Marshman's Chinese version of the Scriptures . . . . .	282
88. To D. Parken, Esq. On Cobbett's writings . . . . .	283
89. To the Rev. Joseph Hughes. Bible society—Mock eloquence at public meetings . . . . .	284
90. To his Parents. Collections at Bourton to repair the loss of the Serampore printing-office—Mr. Foster's sermon on the occasion —His village preaching . . . . .	284
91. To his Parents. Serampore missionaries—The doctrine of Divine assistance . . . . .	285
92. To his Mother. On the death of aged Christians—Visit to Kidder- minster—Baxter's Pulpit—Iron-works . . . . .	286
93. To his Mother. Mental character of the agricultural population compared with that of the manufacturing districts—Necessity of divine influence—Salutary effects of education and the circula- tion of the Bible—The Methodists—Allusions to Mr. Foster's Father . . . . .	287
94. To his Mother. Inclemency of the season—Irreligion of travellers —His own youthful projects for visiting foreign countries— Books of travels and voyages—Their use to a preacher—The wonders of the other world . . . . .	288

	PAGE
95. To Mrs. Bunn. Preachers at Bath—Coleridge's Lectures on Shakespeare—Originality and splendor of his conversation—Theological sentiments—infelicity . . . . .	290
96. To his Mother. Indifference of Monarchs to human life—The magnificence of Nature—Uses of picturesque scenery for the illustration and enforcement of truth—Consolation for aged Christians . . . . .	291
97. To Miss B——. Mr. Hart Davis's collection of paintings—Bristol City Library—Mr. Cottle's collection of letters by Southey and Coleridge—Hall's speech for the British and Foreign School Society—His sermon on "Hast thou made all men in vain?"—His treatise on "Terms of Communion" . . . . .	292
98. To his Mother. Heyne's Virgil—Review of Past life—Resolves for the future . . . . .	294
99. To his Mother. Views of the universe—The Omniscience and goodness of the Divine Being—Lay preachers . . . . .	296
100. To his Mother. Visit to Worcester—Reflections on passing through Pershore (Vide p. 50) . . . . .	297
101. To his Mother. The beauties of spring—The moral deformity of mankind—Rich's "Ruins of Babylon" . . . . .	298
102. To his Mother—Repugnance to literary labor—Review of Hoare's Ancient Wiltshire . . . . .	299
103. To his Mother Domestic happiness—Gratifying instance of devotedness to the cause of religion . . . . .	300
104. To his Mother. Account of the exhumation of several human skeletons near Bonrton . . . . .	301
105. To the Rev. Thomas Langdon. Recollections of early friendship . . . . .	303
106. To B. Stokes, Esq. Graphical work on the Alps . . . . .	305
107. To B. Stokes, Esq. Dr. Cox's illness—Graphical work—Hall . . . . .	306



# MEMOIR.



## CHAPTER I.

PARENTAGE AND BIRTH—EARLY CHARACTER AND OCCUPATIONS—  
BREARLEY HALL—BRISTOL.

1770—1792.

JOHN and ANN FOSTER, the parents of the subject of this memoir, occupied, at the time of his birth, a small farm-house in the parish of Halifax, between Wainsgate and Hebden-bridge.\* In addition to the labors of the farm, they devoted part of their time to weaving. Mr. Foster was a strong-minded man, and so addicted to reading and meditation, that on this account principally he deferred involving himself in the cares of a family till upwards of forty. He received his permanent convictions of Christian truth from that model of apostolic zeal, Mr. Grimshaw, of Halloworth; but subsequently joined a small Baptist church at Wainsgate. Though a person of retired habits,† and averse from mixing in society further than a sense of duty required, he possessed great cheerfulness and enlarged views. "I remember," a valued correspondent observes, "seeing him in company with a dear relative at the time when the British and Foreign Bible Society was first formed, and it is impossible for me to forget the devout exhilaration of the venerable Christian as he conversed on the subject, and indulged in bright visions of hope in reference to the world he was leaving." His acquaintance with theological writers was extensive. His conversation was generally full of

\* The name of the locality, which frequently occurs in the correspondence, was Wadsworth Lanes; the latter term is intended to describe a township road, in which a considerable number of other roads or lanes meet.

† A secluded spot at the bottom of a wood near Hebden-bridge, and adjoining the river Hebden, with a projecting rock, whither the good man used to retire for prayer and meditation, is still known by the name of *John Foster's cave*.



instruction, and showed an acute and discriminating mind. In the society of which he was so valuable a member, he took a leading part; and on the decease of their pastor, read at their meetings every alternate Sunday, "Gurnal's Christian Armor." It is said that when any passage struck him as peculiarly excellent, he would pause and express his approbation by exclaiming, "Author, I am of thy opinion." "That's sound divinity." In Mrs. Foster he found a partner of congenial taste, and his counterpart in soundness of understanding, integrity, and piety. They both lived to a very advanced age, but suffered much from bodily affliction during the latter part of their course. The following characteristic inscription was placed on Mr. Foster's tomb-stone, by his own desire. "John Foster exchanged this life for a better, March 21, 1814, in the eighty-eighth year of his age, and the sixty-third after God had fully assured him that he was one of his sons." Mrs. Foster survived her husband nearly three years, and died December 19, 1816.

Their eldest son, JOHN FOSTER, was born September 17, 1770. When not twelve years old, he had (to use his own words) "a painful sense of an awkward but entire individuality." This was apparent in his manners and language. His observations on characters and events resembled those of a person arrived at maturity, and obtained for him from the neighbors the appellation of "old-fashioned." Thoughtful and silent, he shunned the companionship of boys whose vivacity was merely physical and uninspired by sentiment. His natural tendency to reserve was increased by the want of juvenile associates at home; for his only brother, Thomas, was four years younger than himself, and they had no sisters. His parents, partly from the lateness of their marriage, had acquired habits of too fixed a gravity to admit of that confiding intercourse which is adapted to promote the healthy exercise of the affections. Had a freer interchange of feeling existed, it might have rendered less intense (though it could not have removed) that constitutional pensiveness of Foster's mind, which at times induced "a recoil from human beings into a cold interior retirement," where he felt as if "dissociated from the whole creation." But emotion and sentiment being thus repressed, his outward life was marked by a timidity that amounted to "infinite shyness." A very large proportion of his feelings were so much his own, that he either "felt precisely that they could not be communicated, or he did not feel that they could." His

early antipathies were strong, but "not malicious." His associations were intensely vivid; he had, for instance, an insuperable dislike to a book during the reading of which he had done anything that strongly excited self-reproach; or to whatever was connected with feelings of disgust and horror. For a number of years he would not sit on a stool which had belonged to a man who died in a sudden and strange way, and whose ghost was said to have appeared in a barn near his house. In short his imagination was imperious and tyrannical, and would often haunt him with a scene of Indian tortures, or the idea of a skeleton meeting him each night in a room he had to pass through to bed. "The time of going to bed was an awful season of each day." He was excited to strong emotion by reading passages in favorite authors, such as "Young's Night Thoughts." Even single words (as *chalcidony*), or the names of ancient heroes, had a mighty fascination over him, simply from their sound; and other words from their meaning, as *hermit*.\*

His sensibility, though checked in its social operation, was kindled into intense activity by the contemplation of natural scenery, which in the neighborhood was highly picturesque. The very words, *woods* and *forests*, would produce the most powerful emotion. In matters of taste the *great*† interested him more

\* "I remember, for example, a person, very young indeed, who was so enchanted with the stories of Gregory Lopez, and one or two more pious hermits, as almost to form the resolution to betake himself to some wilderness, and live as Gregory did. At any time the word *hermit* was enough to transport him, like the witch's broomstick, to the solitary hut which was delightfully surrounded by shady, solemn groves, mossy rocks, crystal streams, and gardens of radishes. While the fancy lasted he forgot the most obvious of all facts, that man is not made for habitual solitude, nor can endure it without misery, except when turned into the superstitious ascetic."—*Essay on the Epithet Romantic, Letter 2*.

Of Gregory Lopez, his biographer, father Francis Losa, says, that "for the last six years of his life he never walked abroad, or took the wonted pleasures of solitude,—the prospect of a flowery field, a beautiful wood, a crystal stream, or so much as suffered himself to descend into a pleasant garden adjoining to the house he lived in."—*The Holy Life, Pilgrimage, and blessed Death of Gregory Lopez, a Spanish Hermit in the West Indies. The second edition, London, 1686*.

Mr. Foster remarks in a note to the passage quoted above from his *Essays*, that Gregory did not practise absolute solitude, but was frequently visited for advice in religious matters. His own juvenile predilections, however, led him to covet such solitude, and to retain the gratification of "the pleasant garden, and crystal stream."

† "The tendency to this species of romance may be caused, or may be greatly augmented, by an exclusive taste for what is *grand*, a disease to which some few minds are subject. All the images in their intellectual scene must be colossal and mountainous. They are constantly seeking

than the *beautiful* ; great rocks, vast trees and forests, dreary caverns, volcanoes, cataracts, and tempests, were the objects of his highest enthusiasm : and in the same way, among the varieties of human character, the great and the heroic excited the deepest interest. An abhorrence of cruelty was among his earliest *habitual* feelings. He "abhorred spiders for killing flies, and abominated butchers," though at a very early age, on two occasions, his curiosity led him to a slaughter-house.

His behavior towards his parents was uniformly dutiful ;\* and though his juvenile manifestations of affection were checked from the causes already referred to, yet in mature life no one could give stronger proof of filial regard than he did, by contributing (in proportion to his means very largely) to the support and comfort of their declining years. He began early to assist them in weaving, and till his fourteenth year worked at spinning wool to a thread by the hand-wheel. In the three following years he wove what are called double stuffs, such as lastings, &c. But while thus employed, he "had no idea of being permanently employed in handicraft;" he had the fullest persuasion that something else awaited him, not from the consciousness of superior abilities, but from indulging romantic wishes and plans. "I had when a child," was his confession to Mr. Hughes, "the feelings of a foreigner in the place, and some of the earliest musings that kindled my passions, were on plans for abandoning it. My heart felt a sickening vulgarity before my knowledge could make comparisons." "My involuntary, unreflecting perceptions of the mental character of my very few acquaintance, were probably just, as to their being qualified to reciprocate my sentiments and fancies." Thus, full of restless thoughts, wishes, and passions, on subjects that interested none of his acquaintance, it can excite no surprise that his weaving was often performed very indifferently, and that the master-manufacturer by whom he

what is animated into heroics, what is expanded into immensity, what is elevated above the stars. But for great empires, great battles, great enterprises, great convulsions, great geniuses, great rivers, great temples, there would be nothing worth naming in this part of the creation."—*Essay on the Epithet Romantic, Letter 2.*

\* "Qu. Whether my habit of obedience to my parents in early life did not lessen the general quality of independence and courage? Accustomed to submit from duty to them, I had more respect for other mature persons than I see children have ; but to be unoppressed with respect or fear of grown persons in childhood, may probably contribute very much to the hardy independence, as well as insolence, of youth and manhood."—*MS Journal, No. 782.*

was employed was continually resolving that he would take no more of it. When Foster brought his piece into the "taking-in-room," as it is commonly called, he would turn his head aside, and submit with unequivocal repugnance to the ordeal of inspection. The kind of weaving in which he was employed allowed no scope for invention, being a mere dull repetition of manual operations. Not that he ever showed any particular aptitude for mechanical contrivance. The only instance of the kind known was the construction of a terrestrial globe, when he was ten or eleven years old, on which the various countries were marked with a pen. It had no meridian; the frame was made of three pieces of wood, joined at the centre, the lower part of which served for feet. This self-imposed task was executed with a penknife, and was a long time in hand. He had also "a passion" for "making pictures with a pen."

While residing with his parents he studied closely, but irregularly; he would often shut himself up in the barn for a considerable time, and then come out and weave for two or three hours, "working," as an eye-witness expressed it, "like a horse." His attention during this period was necessarily confined to English literature, his home education not allowing a wider range. His father, however, was ambitious of a higher training for him, and when the lad was only four years old, would lay his hand upon him and say, "This head will one day learn Greek." There was an excellent grammar-school at the neighboring village of Heptonstall, conducted by a Mr. Shackleton; and we have no reason for supposing that the nonconformist principles of the Fosters operated on their minds, or on the master, to preclude their son from enjoying its advantages. Most probably, his assistance at the loom could not be dispensed with, and was incompatible with regular attendance at the school.

With much that was uncongenial and disadvantageous in Foster's circumstances, their moral and religious influences were for the most part highly salutary. In his parents he had constantly before him examples of fervent piety, combined with great sobriety of judgment and undeviating integrity. Their house also was the resort of their Christian neighbors for the purposes of social devotion, or to obtain the benefit of their advice in the perplexities of daily life. A meeting was held there every Tuesday evening, which was always closed with a prayer by Mr. Foster, who never omitted one petition—"O Lord, bless the

lads!" meaning his son John, and his young (and at that time only) companion, Henry Horsfall. The earnestness with which these words were uttered made a deep impression on the two youths. To trace the progress of Foster's piety in its earliest stages, "mingled," as it was, "almost insensibly with his feelings," would be impracticable; its genuineness happily was proved by its "shining more and more unto the perfect day." When about fourteen years old, he communicated to the associate just named the poignant anxiety he had suffered from comparing his character with the requirements of the divine law, and added, that he had found relief only by placing a simple reliance on the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for acceptance before God. Six days after the completion of his seventeenth year he became a member of the Baptist church at Hebden-bridge. His venerable pastor Dr. Fawcett, and other friends who had watched with deep interest his early thoughtfulness and piety, urged him to dedicate his talents to the Christian ministry. Whether he had himself previously formed such a design is not known: the object of their wishes soon became his deliberate choice, and after giving satisfactory proofs of his abilities, he was "set apart" for the ministerial office by a special religious service. For the purpose of receiving classical instruction and general mental improvement, he became shortly after an inmate at Brearley Hall, where Dr. Fawcett, in connexion with his labors as an instructor of youth, directed, at that time, the studies of a few theological candidates.\* Part of each day was still spent in assisting his parents at their usual employments. During the rest of the time, his application to study was so intense as to excite apprehensions for his health. Frequently, whole nights were spent in reading and meditation, and on these occasions, his favorite resort was a grove in Dr. Fawcett's garden. His scholastic exercises were marked by great labor, and accomplished very slowly. Many of his inferiors in mental power surpassed him in the readiness with which they performed the prescribed lessons. One method which he adopted for improving himself in composition, was that of taking paragraphs from different writers, and trying to remodel them, sentence by sentence, into as many forms of expression as he possibly could. His posture on these occasions was to sit with a hand on each knee, and, moving his body to and

\* Among others, one of the illustrious missionary triumvirate at Serampore, WILLIAM WARD.

fro, he would remain silent for a considerable time, till his invention in shaping his materials had exhausted itself. This process he used to call *pumping*. He had a great aversion to certain forms of expression which were much in vogue among some religious people, and declared that if possible he would expunge them from every book by act of parliament; and often said, "We want to put a new face upon things."

At Dr. Fawcett's, Foster had access to a large and miscellaneous library. His course of reading, though extensive, was by no means indiscriminate; and it was observed that he invariably read his favorite authors with extreme care and attention. In general literature no class of books delighted him so much as voyages and travels; and the taste for this kind of reading which so gratified his imaginative faculty, and his love of the marvellous and romantic, never forsook him. In practical theology he was very partial to Watson's "Heaven taken by Storm," the work mentioned by Dr. Doddridge as having been read by Col. Gardiner on the evening of his memorable conversion.

Brearley Hall was environed with hanging woods, except on the south, where it opened by a gentle declivity to the valley. The scenery harmonized with Foster's temperament; and lonely rambles in the surrounding woodlands formed almost his only recreation. On one occasion he persuaded a young companion to walk with him by the river's side from evening to dawn, just, as he said, that they might see how the light in its first approach affected the surrounding scenery.\* Some years afterwards, when on a visit to his parents, he suddenly quitted the house, and started off in a heavy shower to look at a waterfall in the neighborhood of which he had often heard, and on his return said, "I now understand the thing, and have got some ideas on the subject, with which I should not like to part."

"No one," an early friend remarks, "was better qualified to write on 'decision of character.' It was from early life the habitual characteristic of his mind. He formed his purposes, and then proceeded to execute them; nothing wavering. He was always examining everything that came within the range of his observation; neither wind nor weather, night nor day, offered any obstacle; he accomplished his purpose."

\* "One cannot well describe, or even seize the precise steps of the gradation by which, after the sun is set, the evening changes into night. The appearances in the progress of morning are somewhat more palpable."  
—*MS. Misc. Observations*, 1805.

In his sermons, not less than in his conversation, he constantly aimed at imparting freshness to ordinary topics, and generally succeeded. Yet it happened not unfrequently that his hearers were more startled and perplexed than edified. He once preached at Thornton, near Bradford, from the words, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." His object was to show the awful condition of the human race, had not a way of access been provided by God; but his novel mode of treating the subject led an old man (the oracle of his little circle) to remark, "I don't know what he has been driving at all this afternoon, unless to set riddles." "He is going to take us to the stars again," was a frequent observation of his hearers. Yet instances were not wanting in which his discourses made a salutary and indelible impression; two especially, one from the words, "And on his head were many crowns," the other on, "Doing the will of God from the heart," were long remembered.

He was very assiduous in visiting the cottages of the poor, particularly the sick and aged; on these occasions, besides religious conversation and prayer, he generally read the 145th Psalm.\*

After spending about three years at Brearley, application was made for his admission into the Baptist College, Bristol.† He entered that institution shortly after the decease of the president, Dr. Caleb Evans, a man deservedly held in high esteem among

\* "Prayer, and kindly intercourse with the poor, are the two great safeguards of spiritual life; it's more than food and raiment."—DR. ARNOLD (*Life and Correspondence*, vol. ii., p. 58, fifth edit.).

† The recommendation to the managers of the institution was in the following terms:

GENTLEMEN,—The bearer, Mr. John Foster, has been for some years in full communion with us; and, as far as we know, his conversation has been conformable to his Christian profession. We apprehend the great Head of the Church has bestowed upon him such gifts and abilities, as will, through his blessing, render him publicly useful. We, and several other churches in this neighborhood, have had trial of his gifts; and, candid allowance being made for his youth, it is hoped he may, in due time, be an useful laborer in the Lord's vineyard. He wishes to devote a little more time to preparatory study, and requests you will be so kind as to receive him under your patronage for one year, and grant him the usual privileges in that seminary over which you preside. We commend him therefore to you, and, hoping you will receive him under your protection, subscribe ourselves,

Gentlemen,

Your affectionate brethren in Christ,

Signed by us, in behalf of }  
the rest, Aug. 14, 1791. }

JOHN FAWCETT,  
WILLIAM GREAVES,  
WILLIAM THOMAS.

his connexions; the classical tutor, Robert Hall ("clarum et memorabile nomen!"), had just removed to Cambridge; but his place was ably filled by Joseph Hughes, the founder and secretary of the British and Foreign Bible Society; he was only one year and eight months older than Foster; their minds were congenial, and the preceptor and the pupil were each soon merged in the friend. In piety, in mental activity, in ambition of intellectual superiority, in a deep shade of pensiveness, they resembled one another;\* and if one possessed greater originality of thought and affluence of imagination, the other probably was superior in a more exact intellectual training, and had attained a greater maturity of religious character and sentiment.

\* *Memoir of the late Rev. Joseph Hughes*, by Dr. Liefchild, p. 145.



## LETTERS.

## I. TO THE REV. DR. FAWCETT.

*Bristol, Oct. 15, 1791.*

I AM wishing to offer some kind of apology for having neglected so long to write to you. The kindness you have uniformly expressed towards me, and the many advantages I have enjoyed under your care, entitle you to the earliest notices of my circumstances, and at the same time leave me no room to doubt that you still feel interested in my happiness, and that any intelligence respecting my situation will not be unacceptable. I intended to write to you immediately after I had written to Lanes, which was the reason why I did not mention you in that letter. The delay may be attributed to a complication of circumstances. I wished to defer it till I could form some judgment of my real situation, and of the state of things at Bristol. Seldom indeed does any great advantage result from procrastination. I have been in this city now about four weeks; I travelled by the coach from Manchester to Birmingham, and thence in two days walked to Bristol, though a length of eighty-eight miles. You will not wonder that at first I felt myself somewhat gloomy and desolate, notwithstanding kind treatment and agreeable accommodations. The separation from my friends had made a painful impression on my mind, which no object I met with here tended to erase; and the contrast between the delightful situation, the most agreeable and improving conversation, and the ever estimable friends of Brearley Hall, and the smoke and noise, and unknown and uninteresting society of Bristol, produced sensations by no means in favor of the latter. Those feelings, however, which do honor to human nature, may be indulged to an unmanly excess. I have by this time recovered most of the cheerfulness and gaiety of which my mind—a mind not the most gay, indeed, or sprightly—is at any time susceptible. In fact, my situation is extremely agreeable. The cause which contributes most to render it so is friendship. I have no intimacy indeed with any of the young men here. I treat them all and am treated by them, with the most friendly kind of civility, but I feel not the least inclination to any particular attachments. It has always been my ambition to associate with those who are superior to myself. This ambition was often gratified at Brearley Hall; and here I am become very intimate with Mr. Hughes—a circumstance favorable both to my satisfaction and improvement. I generally spend several hours with him every day in reading, in conversation, or walking. He is free, sprightly, and communicative. He possesses great energy of mind—a

variety and originality of thought. His imagination is vivid, and without any great effort supplies an endless train of ideas and images; and, which is the most important quality, he seems to have a deep, experimental acquaintance with religion. I admire him much as a preacher. . . . Dr. Evans is an universally respected, beloved, and lamented character. There have not probably been very many instances of an union of piety, learning, benevolence, and prudence, equally consistent and shining with that which was displayed in him. But he is now no more. . . . The congregation at Broadmead is large and splendid, and the church numerous. The number of us young parsons amounts to about twelve—some of us not very great or amiable characters, it must be confessed. . . . There are, however, two or three among us very promising. The academy possesses many advantages, among which are the extensive and valuable library and philosophical apparatus, the very satisfactory accommodations, and the agreeable situation of the place—agreeable, I mean, when compared with most other parts of the city. Bristol is a flourishing commercial city, but by no means elegant and fine, nor distinguished by intelligence and taste. Bath, however, to which I made an excursion lately with Mr. Hughes, exhibits a great profusion of elegance and splendor.

. . . A few days since, in company with Mr. Hughes, I spent a day with Miss Hannah More. She, with four other sisters, all unmarried, resides at the distance of about ten miles from the city. They are all very sensible and agreeable, but she is quite interesting. She was familiarly acquainted with *Johnson*, and many other distinguished persons who are dead, and is equally well known to most of the geniuses of the present day. Perhaps her poetical abilities, though acknowledged very great, form one of the least of her excellences. If piety and beneficence can give lustre to a character, hers is transcendent. She lives in a kind of retirement, little noticed, except by her distant friends; and, in conjunction with her sisters, whose minds are congenial with her own, employs most of her time in benevolent undertakings, in visiting the poor, furnishing them with necessaries, and procuring instruction for their ignorant children, at the very time that she could figure among poetesses and peeresses. Some of her undertakings, in the design, conduct, difficulties, and success, are so very remarkable, and discover such evident interpositions of divine providence, that they almost assume the air of romance. If I ever saw the spirit of the Redeemer and his religion realized, it is in her conversation and character. I expect the pleasure of visiting her to be pretty often repeated.

I please myself with the hope that you are on the whole comfortable and prosperous, both in respect to religion, and your other engagements. I request you will continue to pray for me. I make my apology for having so long neglected to write. It is indeed with difficulty that I can sequester as much time as I would for purposes of this kind. I hope I am learning in some measure to improve my time; one of the most im-

portant, and to me most difficult of all lessons. In religion I hope I am rather advancing than declining. I have to attend to Latin and Greek every day. A person in the city is at present reading a course of lectures in experimental philosophy, which most of us attend. . . .

---

II. TO MR. H. HORSFALL.

*Bristol, Nov. 16, 1791.*

If you had been my *Dulcinea* I certainly durst not now write at all, after having delayed it so long. You see I am attempting to pass off with a jest what you may think needs a serious apology. I confess it does; but as the case stands I have none to offer. I have been prevented by an odd mixture of business and idleness, each of which you know is unfavorable to writing letters, particularly when letters cost so much labor as mine generally do. I must yet request you to dismiss the suspicion that "I have forgotten you all" at Brearley Hall, and for this reason, that I assure you it is without foundation; at the same time, a sort of confidence that you are all mighty gay and felicitous, enjoying yourselves and one another, has done something toward quieting my conscience in the neglect of writing. . . . I am more obliged to you than I can express for your very curious and sprightly letter. Nothing could have been more acceptable, or more entertaining, not only on account of its coming from you, but on account also of its contents. It will, besides, furnish me with a few ideas (a scarce article at Bristol) to reverberate, and assist me to fill three sides of a sheet, which might otherwise have been a very difficult affair. . . . My regard for you and my other worthy friends at Brearley Hall and at Mount, is not at all diminished by absence and distance. Perhaps I never felt it more warm than at this moment. Probably I shall never enter with such real cordiality into any other friendships. I feel no inclination, nay, I feel a strong aversion, to any attempt to cultivate general or numerous intimacies. Nature never formed me for it. Imagination itself can scarcely place me in a more perfectly pleasing situation than ascending the hill below your father's, and sitting down to tea with your mother. I hope to renew this delightful satisfaction, if all continue well, in something less than eight months. And within this interval I flatter myself (and I am ready to suppose you do the same) with the hope of making very great improvement in learning and in piety. What an estimable possession is time! Permit me to urge you, as I am urging myself, to a nobler improvement of it. I have lately laid down a kind of plan for the distribution of my time and studies, which I already find to be of service. One part of it is, to devote all the time from rising in the morning, which is generally about six o'clock, till half-past eight (when we have family worship succeeded by breakfast), to prayer and reading the bible, together

with a little of some other book of a religious and devotional kind, as *Night Thoughts*, *Saurin's Sermons*, or some other. I trust you are growing in religion; probably neither of us can be more fully convinced than we are, of the vast importance of this. We see some in low circumstances in life, privileged with none of our advantages for the acquisition of knowledge, for retirement, reading, and contemplation, yet glowing with the zeal, and melting with the warmth of piety. Is not the world then entitled to expect from us, something approaching to angelic excellence? "Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required!" I am resolving to be more intimately conversant with the scriptures, and a better resolution, I think, cannot be formed. I wish to read them with vigilant attention and devotional seriousness. A diligent and pious frame of heart will be found, I believe, the best assistance to understand the sacred books. As to expositors, we have here Gill, Henry, Poole, Doddridge, Guyse, Patrick, Hammond, Owen, and twenty more; but I very rarely open any of them. . . . Nothing could be better adapted to check levity, than the account you give me of Mr. Ingham. Where is the person, as you observe, more likely for life than he was? Neither of us, I suppose, can stand in any comparison. Happiness, my friend, absolutely consists in such a state of mind, that death shall be welcome, and life still shall be sweet; that is, in being equally prepared to improve life, or to resign it. . . . I often think that no gratitude can be equal to the mercies with which I am indulged. I very seldom do anything in the way of preaching. I hope you will not cease to pray for me.

---

### III. TO THE REV. DR. FAWCETT

*Bristol, Dec. 26, 1791.*

I THINK that absence, distance, and time, have augmented my regard for you, and my other much valued friends at Brearley. The recollection of the advantages and the pleasures of my situation, when that situation placed me near you, always affects me with gratitude to heaven, with self-congratulation, and at the same time with feelings of regret from the remembrance of pleasures which I now enjoy no more. Brearley is the scene to which fancy recurs with fondness; and I often feel a wish to give some more expressive testimony than I am able of the gratitude and respect I bear to you, and the other characters who honor it. I hope that the happiness of having you for a friend will ever continue, and that I shall ever be concerned to deserve it. Next to the favor of God, my ambition aspires to the esteem and friendship of such men as you; and I wish to acquire and exhibit that superiority of character and abilities which will most effectually tend to ensure them. My present circumstances are very favorable to improvement both in literature and

piety. I wish to advance with rapid, and still accelerated progress. The value of time, the deficiencies of my character, and possible attainments, flash upon my mind with more forcible conviction than ever before. I can sometimes grasp the idea of universal and transcendent excellence; and it always excites, at least, a temporary ebullition of spirit. I cannot doubt the possibility of becoming greatly wise and greatly good; and while such an object places itself in view, and invites pursuit, no spirit that possesses the least portion of ethereal fire can remain unmoved. I despise mediocrity. I wish to kindle with the ardor of genius. I am mortified almost to death, to feel my mind so contracted, and its energies so feeble or so torpid. I read such writers as Young and Johnson with a mixture of pleasure and vexation. I cannot forbear asking myself, Why cannot I think in a manner as forcible and as original as theirs? Why cannot I rise to their sublimities of sentiment, or even to an elevation still more stupendous? Why cannot I pierce through nature with a glance? Why cannot I effuse those beams of genius which penetrate every object, and illuminate every scene? I believe the possible enlargement of the human mind is quite indefinite, and that Heaven has not fixed any impassable bounds.

I am solicitous to cultivate warm and growing piety. I know that on it happiness entirely depends, and that without it intellectual pursuits either cannot be successful, or in proportion to the degree of success will be injurious. That character is the most dignified which reflects the most lively image of the divine excellence. Heaven is the proper region of sublimity; and the more we dwell there, the more we shall triumph in conscious grandeur of soul. Intimate communion with the Deity will invest us, like Moses, with a celestial radiance. At the same time, I am experimentally convinced that the spirit of religion is extremely delicate and fine, and no moderate degree of vigilance is requisite to preserve it. This vigilance is absolutely incompatible with indolence and thoughtlessness; and these are the evil spirits that most particularly haunt me, and from which I have suffered, and still suffer, greatly. Oh for a mind all alive to religion, completely consecrated to God, and habitually devotional! Habitual piety is indeed a very interesting subject: it has lately often struck my thoughts. I am wishing to know how far, and by what means, it is really attainable. Though I would wish to concentrate in myself all the genuine piety in the world, I yet suspect there is such a thing as a *romantic* religion. Amidst the laborious, the even painfully laborious, efforts which religion requires, amidst opposition from within and from without, amidst the intricacies that perplex, the burdens that fatigue, the impediments that obstruct, and the allurements that divert, I hope I am making some progress; and I request that your prayers may promote it. . . . Intelligence of any importance seems rather scarce at the north end of Bristol; probably not so at Brearley, as it is communicated through so many different channels. I hear of no very capital projects or manœuvres in the republic

of letters, as it is called. Perhaps you have seen Cowper's Homer. I still cannot but wish that he had been differently employed. I have not taken much notice of it. On reading a few passages I thought, This may possibly be Homer himself, but if it is, Pope is a greater poet than Homer. . . . I continue on terms of the most perfect intimacy with Mr. Hughes, which I consider as a very great felicity. His age is only twenty-three. His mental vigor is very great, and of such a nature as to communicate a kind of contagion. . . . Next week I expect to be some time with Mr. Hughes at Bath, where the Miss Mores reside during the winter. You will allow that a few of my hours may be well spent in forming plans of study and improvement for the next half year, and that the design is laudable of beginning to live anew. . . .

---

IV. TO MR. H. HORSFALL.

*Bristol, Jan. 6, 1792.*

I most humbly beg your pardon for this long interval between receiving and answering your letter. You must know I affect to be a *genius*, and geniuses claim an indulgence to be irregular. But yet, if I had felt a proper degree of sympathy with you in the very afflictive circumstances which your letter describes, my sensibility would have led me to write sooner. As I will never relinquish the character of sensibility, which has been generally found connected with genius, I exculpate myself by observing that when you wrote "the bitterness of death was past," and your letter was calculated, not to infuse melancholy, but to excite those pleasurable sensations which are felt in reflecting on sorrows that are gone. At the same time, I feel for you painfully in the apprehension that the afflictions from which I hope you at present experience a happy exemption, may too frequently return upon you. For my own part, I confess I wish to be taught to sympathize with sorrow without so much of the discipline of actual suffering. Still, however, may I be resigned to the gracious will of Heaven !

I was requesting pardon ;—how fortunate that other mortals are guilty, and need pardon as well as myself ! This is particularly the case with you. Certainly, to send me half a sheet was most notorious ; and but for the passionate cries, and entreaties, and promises with which you conclude, I should fall on you without mercy. Even these can scarcely secure you from the effects of my indignation ; but I will endeavor to calm the furious passion, with the hope that you will never do so again, if I will but excuse this once. It is long since I wrote to you before, but silence itself may instruct. As for instance, from my silence you may infer, first, that my esteem for you is such that I have not words in which to express it ; secondly, that the city suggests no new ideas to be communicated ; thirdly, that I have not yet fallen in love ; or, fourthly,

that I dare not tell it ; fifthly, that I am not extremely concerned about what you tell me of certain persons of our acquaintance, and their attempts and designs. These are inferences which you would not, perhaps, have drawn, but could anything be more obvious ? . . .

. . . . I am a little acquainted with two or three very worthy and amiable females, and from them, you must know, my intellectual qualities have gained me great respect. . . . 'Tis time to inform you that you are a set of ignorant, tasteless things in Yorkshire, for these ladies pronounce that my countenance, though very grave, has yet a pleasing air, expressive of sensibility and benevolence. What silly folks you were to take up a different opinion when I was among you ! . . . I perfectly accord to your very serious reflexion on ruffles and hair-dressing. But it happens oddly, that while you are grave, I am in the humor to laugh. I am thinking how you would look with *powder*. It is said to give my appearance a considerable advantage ; you will not therefore wonder that I frequently use it. What contributed a good deal to gain me the respect of the ladies I mentioned was, an *Oration on Sensibility*, written as an academical exercise ; it has been bandied about, and read, more than it deserves. It was sent, without my knowing it, to Dr. Stennett, and is now, I believe, somewhere in Oxfordshire. I have repeatedly designed to burn it. I think I have produced an abler composition since. I wrote all the sermon I preached last Sunday at our meeting in Broadmead. . . . I hope you are advancing in learning and religion. I sometimes ask myself what it is to live well. It is to be pious, benevolent, and diligent. To be pious, is to be fully consecrated to God—to cherish his love, to obey his commands, and to live and act with a direct view to his glory. To be benevolent, is to be kindly affectioned towards men, to pray for them, to employ all our ability for their good. To be diligent, is [the manuscript is here imperfect] . . . I would urge you to read the Bible, morning and evening . . . the genuine, original, untainted fountain, with an attention exclusive of almost all . . . The work of religion is difficult, difficult indeed. "Trust in the Lord, be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thy heart." I request an interest in your prayers.

---

V. TO MR. H. HORSFALL.

*Bristol, March 13, 1792.*

. . . . The engagements and possessions of this life are to us valuable, precisely in that proportion in which they prepare, or conduce to prepare us for another. You express a hope of being a better man by the time you see me. I would cordially and ardently adopt the same hope for myself. If Providence shall bring about that event, at the time and in the manner desired, it must yet be preceded by a long train of

hours, each of which is given for some valuable end. Let us, my friend, try with earnestness of what improvements our intellects and our piety are really capable, in such a space of time. I have no news for you. This is a soil not fertile of remarkable incidents. Commercial pursuits (and what else can Bristol exhibit?) do not always interest the philosopher; it is certain they have seldom interested me . . . .




---

VI. TO THE REV. DR. FAWCETT.

*Bristol, March 30, 1792.*

If any engagement has a claim to be thought pleasing, it certainly must be that of writing to you. To converse with one that is always kind, and who views everything and every character with an eye of candor, is truly grateful; and writing, as the substitute for personal intercourse, admits a degree of the same pleasure. That I have not written oftener, therefore, must be attributed to that excessive indolence which is unwilling to purchase even the highest satisfaction at the price of a little mental labor. I am so fully conscious of this unfortunate quality, that I am sometimes ready to wish myself engaged in some difficult undertaking, which I absolutely must accomplish, or die in the attempt. I am convinced that on me a retired life would lose many of its advantages. The composure of it, instead of removing obstructions and exciting my powers to action, would soothe them into languor and debility. . . . Long as it is since I wrote to you before, no incident worthy of particular notice has occurred—or perhaps the very circumstance of my being apt to suffer things to pass without notice, is itself the reason why I do not distinguish and recollect particulars. Many events may possibly have engaged the attention of other men, which I was too thoughtless to observe, or too ignorant to comprehend their consequence. I am a very indifferent philosopher, I confess, for I have neither curiosity nor speculation. This inattention to the external world might be excused if the deficiency were supplied from within. If I were like some men, a kingdom or a world within myself, superior entertainment should soon make my friends forget the uninteresting particulars of ordinary intelligence. How enviable the situation—to feel the transition from the surrounding world into one's own capacious mind, like quitting a narrow, confined valley, and entering on diversified and almost boundless plains. If this felicity were mine, I might be equally unconcerned to obtain or to recollect the news of the town. I might explore new and unknown regions of intellect and fancy—and after having carried my career to a distance which the most erratic comets never reached, return with the most glowing and amazing descriptions of the scenes through which I had passed.

Your family is by its constitution subject to perpetual change. It is



formed not for itself, but for the world; not to increase private and domestic happiness, but to subserve the public welfare. This consideration, I think, must be capable of yielding high satisfaction. There is something peculiarly animating in the idea of diffusing knowledge and happiness through the world. . . .

. . . . I often feel a solicitude to know what are those schemes of usefulness which unite, in their greatest degrees, cool reason and the boldness and spirit of generous adventure. A few nights ago I was in company with a Quaker, a man whom I would select as one of the first specimens of possible human excellence. His sentiments discover a superiority of intellect, and his character admits, I believe, few rivals. His conversation was chiefly directed to prove the practicability of many designs which that kind of wisdom which is unconnected with benevolence and generosity is always ready to condemn, and which the world deem romantic and preposterous. His ideas, which were quite original, struck me with all the force of truth, and scarcely wanted the assistance of many interesting facts with which he illustrated and confirmed them. It appears to me that but little is accomplished, because but little is vigorously attempted; and that but little is attempted, because difficulties are magnified. A timorously cautious spirit, so far from acting with resolution, will never think itself in possession of the preliminaries for acting at all. Perhaps perseverance has been the radical principle of every truly great character.

I am sometimes apprehensive that I do not give to religion that preference of regard which it merits, and that superiority of influence with which it ought to operate on the system of life. I feel that religion is the life of every genuine excellence, but must lament an unhappy tendency rather to deviate from it than embrace it. Religion presents itself in an appearance different from direct and honest Christianity—a little more *softened* to the spirit of the world—affecting, at the same time, to retain all the essential qualities of Christianity. When led into the scenes of life by this kind of equivocal piety, men are apt to lose the true spirit and feelings of religion; they substitute a certain chimerical generosity of spirit for Christian zeal, and, inflamed by a delusive idea of greatness and expansion of mind, break down the sacred boundaries that separate important truth from dangerous error. I find that in attempting to clear away the extraneous matter which ignorance and prejudice have attached to religion, there is danger of a presumptuous freedom which injures the great object itself. Everything rises in proof of the necessity of seeking both our happiness and our wisdom entirely from on high. . . . Two of those whom I left in your family are, it seems, taken off by death. There is at least thus much of the consolatory in the event, that death has intercepted the many sorrows and sins which the train of advancing life would have brought on; and if the loss shall give those who feel it most sensibly more fully to God, it will be happily compensated. . . . I often recollect Dr. Young's ex-

pression, "Give thy mind sea-room." There are minds, and I must admire them, that disdain all restraints but those alone which the Deity has imposed. Perhaps it must be allowed, at the same time, that spirits of infinite vigor and fire are not the most necessary characters in the government of the world, or the cause of religion. The greatest abilities are not always well directed, and when well directed do not always produce an adequate effect. . . . Hall is expected by his relations in Bristol next month. I shall be quite eager to see him. The opinion which the most sensible here entertain of his powers leads me to think that all the accounts you have heard rather fall below than exaggerate them.

---

VII. TO MR. H. HORSFALL.

*Bristol, April 2, 1792.*

. . . . Depend on it, if I find any faults about you when I see you again, I shall criticise them with the most bitter and sarcastic severity. For instance, if you are silent in a circle of sensible friends, I shall either say you are unsocial, or insinuate that you are *ignorant*. If I find you have told all your secrets and mine to Miss — and Lady —, I shall remind you that it is necessary there should be some silly fellows to serve the ladies for playthings; just as children must have their dolls. If you continue in the use of *sugar*, I shall greatly suspect your generosity and humanity; I never taste it in any form. I have even almost forgot it, so that I never feel the want of it. Tea is now become as agreeable without sugar as before it was with it. . . . This is a fair warning now. If you are conscious of any of these faults, I hope you will take care to reform in time. I wonder whether, when we may appear together again, some of our friends will like us as ill as they did before. I hope we shall give no just cause for their ill-natured observations, and their idle remarks. But if they will find, or make a cause, let them fully please themselves. . . . Let us mortify their captiousness by that kind of contempt alone which is expressed by displaying a noble superiority of understanding, manliness, and piety. The impertinence of conceit is unworthy of notice; but let us be anxiously concerned that neither our enemies nor our pretended friends may ever have it in their power to impeach our characters with respect to any serious and important matter. I trust, my dear friend, we shall ever stand at a distance from everything vain and foolish,—everything foppish and affected,—everything proud, self-important, and disgusting. Whenever we discover a disregard of serious and important concerns, and whenever we appear as if we thought ourselves too dignified or too wise to converse and be familiar, occasionally, at least, with the meanest and most ignorant, we shall betray ourselves into our enemies' hands, and justify in a measure their reflexions.

I hope you go forward with pleasure in the pursuits of learning. It is delightful to feel one's mind enlarging, to contemplate an endless succession of new objects, to extend our conquests in the regions of intellect and fancy, and to be perpetually aspiring to the sublimities of knowledge and of piety. We find that resolution and diligence are never exerted in vain. Sincere and well-directed efforts will promote our religion, as much as study will improve us in learning, or experience increase our prudence. Everything is attainable which we can justify ourselves in desiring; and certainly we cannot too warmly desire whatever can make us more happy in ourselves, or qualify us to impart happiness to others. Nothing can so effectually expand the mind as the views which Religion presents; for the views of Religion partake of the magnitude and glory of that Being from whom Religion proceeds. Their amplitude will extend, and their dignity will exalt, the mind. . . .

Amidst your pleasures and your prospects, surely you can admit one thought of pity for a poor exile on whom love never smiles, before whom no pleasing prospects open, and to whom life itself is insipid. But, if life cannot make me happy, let it never make me malignant. If the visits of happiness to me are but transient, that very circumstance, perhaps, renders them more permanent to my friends. While the inhabitants of the North Pole are involved in a tedious night, those of the South enjoy perpetual day. . . . Perhaps I may hope to hear from you before I go off to Africa. . . . This minute I have received a letter from Mr. T. Stovin, at Birmingham, in which he particularly inquires whether I ever hear from you. He writes seriously. In my last to him I expressed a wish that he would hear Mr. Pearce, a lively, popular young preacher at Birmingham, who a few years since went from our Academy. He writes: "On your recommendation I went to hear Mr. Pearce. He is, I think, an excellent preacher, and puts me in mind of those frequent admonitions and instructions I have heard from good Mr. Fawcett. These instructions afford me an ample theme of reflexion," &c. I always thought him a youth of a generous spirit. How happy should I be to see that spirit ennobled by religion!

---

VIII. TO MR. H. HORSFALL.

*Bristol, April 19, 1792.*

. . . . I once felt something like *envy* in observing how Mr. H. and several others of the same class would preach; but I believe I should not feel the slightest degree of it now. I think I should feel no more difficulty in preaching before twenty of them than before so many children. You say I must do something great in the preaching line when I come into Yorkshire. Let not my Yorkshire friends expect too much. Probably there never was a more indolent student at this or any other Academy.

I know but very little more of learning or anything else than when I left you. I have been a trifier all my life to this hour. When I shall reform, God only knows! I am constantly wishing and intending it. But my wishes and intentions have thus far displayed, in a striking degree, the imbecility of human nature. To-morrow is still the time when this unhappy system of conduct shall be rectified.

My dear friend, I hope you are diligent and pious. Time is infinitely valuable. Oh! do not suffer it to be lost. I hope you already possess and exercise that wisdom which I hope at last to attain. The work of life is great—greater to me, in proportion to the long season that I have neglected it. I perceive that religion does not promise in order to deceive, nor threaten in order to dismay; her intentions are uniformly kind. Be much in prayer, and in your prayers do not forget me. . . . Our vacation will commence in five or six weeks; if well, I must then spend a week or two in visiting Bath, Cowslip Green, the country residence of the Miss Mores, and some other places. The time I shall be in London is uncertain. . . .

---

IX. TO THE MANAGERS OF THE BAPTIST COLLEGE.

*Bristol, May 26, 1792.*

HONORED GENTLEMEN,—The expiration of the term of literary privileges reminds me of the acknowledgments due to those to whose liberality I owe them.

One year has passed, attended with the important favors of your patronage, which has given value to time by conferring the advantages for improving it. My gratitude for your kindness will I trust be lasting; and never disappoint that kindness by neglecting or relinquishing its object. May He, whose cause you wish to promote, amply reward you! and may all who thus experience your generous assistance reflect honor on the institution and on you. Quitting the seminary without any determinate prospects, I humbly await that train of futurity through which superior wisdom may conduct me, firmly resolved, at the same time, that every scene into which I may be introduced, shall witness me actively alive in the cause of religion and of God.

I am, honored gentlemen, with grateful respect,

Your obliged and humble servant,

J. FOSTER.

## CHAPTER II.

## NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE—IRELAND—RETURN TO YORKSHIRE.

1792—1796.

AFTER leaving Bristol, the first place in which Mr. Foster regularly engaged as a preacher was Newcastle-on-Tyne.\* An ancient room in this town, situated at the top of a flight of steps called Tuthill Stairs, and formerly used as the Mayor's Chapel, had been occupied by a Baptist congregation ever since the year 1725. It was capable of holding scarcely more than a hundred persons, and both before and during Foster's stay the average attendance was much below this number. Yet, in so small an auditory, there were a few individuals capable of appreciating the merits of the preacher, and who took a very gratifying interest in his discourses. "I have involuntarily caught a habit," he tells his friend Mr. Horsfall, "of looking too much on the right hand side of the meeting. 'Tis on account of about half-a-dozen sensible fellows who sit together there. I cannot keep myself from looking at them. I sometimes almost forget that I have any other auditors. They have so many significant looks, pay such a particular and minute attention, and so instantaneously catch anything curious, that they become a kind of mirror in which the preacher may see himself. Sometimes, whether you will believe it or not, I say humorous things. Some of these men instantly perceive it, and smile; I, observing, am almost betrayed into a smile myself!"†

Mr. Foster remained at Newcastle little more than three months;

\* His immediate predecessor was the late REV. JOSEPH KINGHORNE, of Norwich, who, in his denomination, was inferior only to Dr. Gill in an intimate acquaintance with Rabbinical literature. The results of his studies were known to the public chiefly by a new edition of professor James Robertson's "*Clavis Pentateuchi*," and a sermon preached before the Society for the Conversion of the Jews, on "*The Miracles of Jesus not performed by the power of the Shemhamphorash*."

† The only survivor of this little group, J. L. Angas, Esq., has a vivid recollection of the breathless attention with which they listened to Mr. Foster's discourses. One sermon especially, on "This is not your rest," made an indelible impression on his mind.

he arrived August 5, 1792, and left towards the close of November. According to his own account, his mode of life during this period was almost that of a recluse ; his mental habits were undisciplined, his application to study fitful and desultory, and his purpose as to the specific employment of his future life unfixed. "I am thinking," he writes to his friend, who was then a student at Brearley, "how different is the state of the family in which you reside from that where my lot is fixed for the present. Your family seems a kind of ludicrous-moral museum, comprising specimens of all the odd productions found in the world of men. Now observe the contrast. Mrs. F. is, with one of the servants, gone some time since to London, and the whole mansion is now left to Mr. F., one maid, and myself. Mr. F. was bit by the mastiff that guards the factory, so severely that he has been confined to the house, and at present does not even quit his bed-chamber. Now, then, I absolutely breakfast, dine, drink tea, and sup alone ; except that beside my table places himself Pero, a large and very generous dog, my most devoted friend, and the willing companion of all my adventures. Having, you know, neither spouse nor children, I frequently amuse myself with Pero. I am mistaken, or the name of Pero shall live when your coxcombs, your consequential blockheads, and your . . . images of fattened clay are heard of no more. Though the town is only about two or three hundred yards from the house, I never take any notice of it, and very rarely enter it, but on the Sunday. I often walk into the fields, where I contemplate horses and cows, and birds and grass ; or along the river, where I observe the motions of the tide, the effect of the wind, or, if 'tis evening, the moon and stars reflected in the water. When inclined to read, I am amply furnished with books. When I am in the habit of musing, I can shut myself in my solitary chamber, and walk over the floor, throw myself in a chair, or recline on my table ; or if I would dream, I can extend myself on the bed. When the day is fled, I lie down in the bosom of night, and sleep soundly till another arrives ; then I awake, solitary, still, I either rise to look at my watch, and then lay myself awhile on the bed looking at the morning skies, or . . . in a magic reverie behold the varied scenes of life, and poise myself on the wings of visionary contemplation over the shaded regions of futurity . . . Such, my friend, are the situation and the train in which I pass life away." At another time, in a tone of deeper sentiment, he thus expresses himself: "I sometimes feel

the review of the past very interesting. The vicissitudes which my views and feelings have undergone have been numerous and great. They have never remained long stationary, and they were perhaps never in a more uncertain and fluctuating state than at present. I feel conscious of possessing great powers, but not happily combined, nor fully brought forth. Some habits of the most unfortunate and dangerous kind have taken root, and will not be exterminated, I am afraid, without great difficulty.\* At the age of twenty-two, I feel that I have still to begin to live ; I have yet in a great measure my principles to fix, my plans to form, my means to select, and habits of exertion to acquire ; a Herculean labor, how shall I accomplish it ?" In another letter of a later date, he says, "How dark is futurity still ! how uncertain and limited our prospects ! I wonder what or where my next undertaking will be ! I am apprehensive it will not be in the line of preaching ; but I leave it to that futurity where it dwells, and whence no conjectures can invite it."

From Newcastle Mr. Foster returned to his friends in Yorkshire, but left them again in the beginning of the year 1793, having been invited to preach to a Baptist society meeting in Swift's Alley, Dublin. Nearly all that is known of the events of his life during the three following years is contained in one of his letters to Mr. Hughes, dated October 17, 1796. The introductory sentences are too characteristic to be omitted. "Your letter surprised me," he says, "into a pleasure strong enough to survive a struggle with the guilty consciousness of neglect. My silence appears strange even to myself ; and I know not whether it will be rendered less so to you, while I observe, that in our last personal intercourse, I felt the oppression of a mortifying inferiority and awkwardness, which after several months, during which I intended to write, grew into a kind of determination to become unknown till I should be quite worthy to be known. Meanwhile, I have always retained the fixed resolve of offering, at a better period, an atonement, in a more meritorious friendship ; I have eagerly seized every opportunity of obtaining information concerning you ; and assure you, from a heart that has not yet learned insincerity from the world, that my regard for you has

\* To prevent any misapprehension of the strong language here employed by so rigid and conscientious a self-observer, it may be remarked, that on comparing it with other passages in the correspondence, it is evident Foster alludes to what he elsewhere terms, "the inveterate, most unfortunate habits of indolent, desultory, musing vagrancy."

suffered no diminution. It is among my most flattering anticipations that I shall yet again find myself 'in the same room with you and Mrs. H.,' to taste (may I hope with even superior zest?) enjoyments *something like* those which are gone." . . .

"In Ireland," he proceeds to inform his friend, "I preached little more than a year, one month of which was passed most delightfully at Cork. Nothing can be imagined less interesting than the Baptist society in Dublin. The congregation was very small when I commenced, and almost nothing when I voluntarily closed. A dull scene it was, in which I preached with but little interest, and they heard with less. The church, of which, with a very few regular or casual hearers besides, the whole congregation consisted, was composed of a rich family or two, quite people of the world—of three or four families in business, emulating the show and consequence of the others—of half a dozen poor individuals, so little connected with their Christian *superiors*, and so little regarded by them, that between them was '*a Gadibus ad Gangem*'—and an independent character or two, tired and ashamed of such a society. With such an assemblage the soul of Foster was not formed to coalesce, and my connexions were fewer than could be supposed possible to a public person.

"I sought, and partly found, a compensation among the girls of a charity-school, connected with the meeting, to whom I talked with familiar gaiety, gave rewards of learning, and read many amusing books;\* in solitary rambles, books, newspapers, converse with the few who *were* friends, the greater part of them not of the church; and in speculating on the varieties of a metropolis.

"I did not distinguish myself by any considerable violation of the parsonic garb; . . . but my contempt of ecclesiastical formalities was avowed and apparent on all occasions; and my acquaintance did not involve a single man of *cloth* in the city. After an interval of several months spent in Yorkshire, I returned to Dublin to make an experiment on a classical and mathematical school, which had been left to decline to nothing but the room and

\* "His habits were very simple; he was fond of walking, and evidently, while he paced round our little garden, his mind was full of some subject of deep interest. I also know, that the children of an orphan school connected with the place of worship in which he officiated had much of his care, and he went daily to read to the children instructive and amusing books, and seemed most solicitous to improve their minds, and to cheer them in the midst of their dull routine."—*Extract of a Letter from J. Purser, Esq., of Rathmines.*



forms, by a very respectable Quaker of my acquaintance, now or lately in London. The success did not encourage me to prosecute it more than eight or nine months. I remained in Dublin several months after its relinquishment. I attended as a hearer in Swift's Alley when there was service, but had little more connexion with the people than if I had never seen them before. . . I think the last letter I received predicted the extinction of the society.\*

"During this latter residence in Dublin, my connection with violent democrats, and my share in forming a society under the denomination of 'Sons of Brutus,' exposed me at one period to the imminent danger, or at least the expectation, of chains and a dungeon.

"I have in Ireland three or four cordial friends, for whose sake I shall be pleased with any future opportunity of revisiting it. I have now been here more than half a year. If you should ask, How employed? I can scarcely tell; a little in business, I might say, in which my brother is engaged; but oftener in literature, or rather its environs. I long since indulged the design of some time writing for publication; I am lately come into it more decisively. After fluctuating among various subjects and forms of writing, I have drawn the plan of a kind of moral essay, and composed an inconsiderable part; but my intolerable tardiness in writing, together with the constitutional indolence which I have not yet overcome, threatens long to protract the accomplishment; and my dissatisfaction with what I produce, precludes that enthusiasm which is said to be necessary to excellence. However, I am resolved on a complete experiment.

"Some months since, I formed the project of attempting at Leeds, where my occasional sermons have found some admirers, a course of lectures on moral and literary subjects, in a mode somewhat similar to Thelwall's, but it was not encouraged into execution. I had conceived the plan, too, of a train of discourses, different from sermons only in being without texts, on moral and religious subjects, addressed entirely to young people, to be publicly delivered each Sunday evening, in the meeting where I attend. There could be no interest but that of benevolence here. I intended my utmost efforts to simplify, illustrate, and persuade, by every expedient in the power of a mind possessed of a measure

\* This prediction has not been fulfilled. The congregation has continued and a new chapel, in a more commodious site, has been lately built.

both of amplitude and originality. But Mr. —, a very good and sensible, but a timid man, tenacious of modes and notions which the church and time have sanctioned, and dreading the profane and ill-omened flight of philosophy and fancy athwart *the good old way*, as peasants turn back in dismay at the sight of three magpies crossing their road, durst not admit such a measure, 'for it would not be preaching the gospel!' So now, you ought to applaud my activity in forming plans, and my philosophy in bearing their disappointment.

"It is now a great while since I changed, very properly, the cleric habit for a second edition of tail and colored clothes, and in this guise I have preached at several places since I returned to England; but I have not preached at all lately. Yet, after all, I extremely regret that I am not employed in preaching. When I contemplate the infinite value of religion, the melancholy darkness of human minds (especially while I view the interesting countenances of young people, on whom alone, perhaps, any good can be operated), I am forcibly admonished that a man like me should be something else amidst the assemblies of Sunday than what I am,—a very inattentive hearer. But what should I do? It is vain to wish what would exactly gratify me—the power of building a meeting of my own, and, without being controlled by any man, and without even the existence of what is called a *church*, of preaching gratis to all that chose to hear.

"That denomination of people in which I have been conversant, have stronger causes of exception than the color of a waistcoat;—my *opinions* have suffered some alterations. I have discarded, for instance, the doctrine of eternal punishments; I can avow no opinion on the peculiar points of Calvinism, for I have none, nor see the possibility of forming a satisfactory one. I am no Socinian; but I am in doubt between the orthodox and Arian doctrines, not without some inclination to the latter. It is a subject for deliberate, perhaps long, investigation; and I feel a sincerity which assures me that the issue, whatever it may be, must be *safe*. In this state of thoughts and feelings, I have just written to Mr. David, of Frome, requesting to be informed whether there be, within his sphere of acquaintance, an Arian congregation in want of a preacher, expressing to him, however, that 'my preference of *such* a congregation does not arise from a conclusive coincidence of opinion, but from a conviction that there only I can find the candor and scope which I desire.' But I am vexed to

find this tedious detail has precluded me from subjects more interesting and more mutual. . . . I felt a propensity to smile at your confession of the wane of the sentimental fire, till checked by a most mournful consciousness of something similar in myself. Indeed, indeed, it is too soon. . . . When sometimes apprehensive that fate means to deny me the sweet ambling circle of love and domestic felicity, I almost resolve to assume the stalk sublime of the hero adventuring to carry humanity amidst savage nature in some distant clime. . . . My mother is not greatly altered from what she was some years back ; but my father is rapidly declining, by a painful course, to the grave. If I were not too proud to solicit what I do not deserve, I should breathe a warm, a very warm wish, to hear from you soon again. The first step of generosity is probably the easiest. Give me a detail at least as copious as the example furnished in this. Bristol has lost the interest it held in my mind, by the successive defection of all I most esteemed there. . . . If you know any congregation, of the description hinted above, in want of a preacher, I shall take it as kind if you will just mention it."

While at Dublin, Mr. Foster resided with the late John Purser, Esq., and endeared himself to all the inmates, especially to the young people and the domestics. He often read to the family in the evening ; generally works of fiction. Mrs. Radcliff was a very great favorite, and the translations of Schiller. The impression he gave of himself to one of his young companions was that of "a condescending friend who was desirous of putting their mental machinery in motion." At Cork, though his stay was short, he was much admired, and his abilities were more highly estimated than at Dublin.

The following "*Journal of three days*," originally written at Dublin in 1793, but transcribed by Foster in 1796, when he consigned many papers of former years to the flames, will be read with interest, as a record of his interior sentiments :

Dec. 6, 1793. Reason, dignity, approaching death, concur in the solemn command, "Delay no longer !" I obey, and my soul shall sleep no more. Can time a month hence be more valuable than time *now* ? or if it should, will the time that shall end the month, be the same that now passes in the beginning of it ? Why then should any of the moments, which are all beyond price, be lost ? Let them be lost no longer. Passing and insignificant are the circumstances of exterior life. The man that seeks the object and the felicity of human life only in eating,

drinking, sleeping, dressing, traffic, walking, resting, had better never have been born. But the internal life, the life of the immortal spirit, is all-important. Who would not wish to raise it to the loftiest pitch of improvement and felicity? I feel myself entrusted with the education of my mind; and attention cannot be too solicitous. 'Tis determined to stimulate, to guide, to watch, its operations. The object is, to acquire habits of thinking, observation, devotion, and converse. It will be useful to record the degree of success; at least make an experiment of one month.

Well, the day is gone. Though it has not done much, it has given proof that much may be done. The world of possible improvements is truly boundless. When I look over the immense plain of nature and man, and see so many thousand objects capable of suggesting new and interesting trains of thought—so many tracks which spirits unembodied seem alone to have trod, how I pity those who are content to confine themselves exclusively to the stupid bustle of business, or who, anxious for intellectual pleasure and wealth, seek them only in the tedious dullness of common-place writers. But the day has gone, and it has not extinguished my hopes, though it has but imperfectly realized my plan. I rose before eight, dressed, and went out to walk. The walk pleasing, though not fertile of sentiment or reflection. How great still the difficulty of *fixing attention*. I noticed drops of rain falling on a sheet of water. They have but the most transient effect on the water; they make a very slight impression of the moment, and then can be discerned no more. But observe these drops of rain falling on a meadow or garden; *here* they have an effect to heighten every color, and feed every growth. Is not this the difference between the mind which the infinitude of sentiments and objects in this great world can never interest or alter, and that mind which feels the impression, and enriches itself with the value of them all? Those things are among the first rights of man, which all men absolutely need; as *food*. Men assert the right to eat with the greatest constancy, and if opposed, with the utmost vehemence. Perhaps nothing so often raises quarrels among children. In every age men have been ingenious, industrious, or knavish, in order to eat. Frequently, too, for this they have been cruel, and often they have fought. As life cannot be sustained without eating, most men would risk even life, in order to obtain meat, when it cannot be gained without difficulty or danger. Some men, like certain dogs, see the approaching opportunity of mischief with an equivocal and frightful expression in their countenances, produced by the mingling feelings of pleasure and malignity. Art can sometimes give to the looks of deadly hatred a certain *tinge of blandishment*, which empowers them to fascinate while they alarm. They terrify while they allure, and yet allure while they terrify. Some serpents have the power by their eyes of charming birds, mice, &c., into their mouths. I have observed that men of business who pass their lives in the town, when they incidentally meet one another, or their other

acquaintance, wear an air that looks like *notice without attention*. They see a person as they see a post, without the slightest feeling of concern, without any movement of mind that acknowledges an interest in his existence, or his case.

I walked and observed the pensive, most interesting remains of the departing Autumn; noticed the singing of birds, a distant landscape, and miserable-looking men at work; returned, employed my mind on various subjects and fancies, without result, and made several attempts to *study* letters, without success; read nothing but newspapers. In the evening from seven o'clock till between eight and nine, at the prayer-meeting in Swift's Alley; from that time till between eleven and twelve, on a visit; most of the company very insipid; took no part in the conversation, which, however, was plentiful, but was much amused with observation. But, indeed, is it right to be amused with the folly of beings who ought to be wise? One part of the circle was composed of ladies. . . . I listened to their chat. . . . But though full of transitions, it was so rapid and incessant, that philosophic observation was somewhat baffled. . . . I think I heard not one sentiment. There was a long dispute whether a particular house in the town had a door on a certain side. I contemplated with a degree of wonder. I thought, Have you no ideas about realities and beings that are unseen? about the eternal Governor, and a future state? Is this all you find in life, and all by which you fortify yourselves against death? I wish I could have formed a clear conception of the situation of their minds,—that I could be privy to their serious reflections, if they ever have such, or if not, discover how they escape them. The gentlemen talked on forgery, trials, criminals, instances of murder, extent of the laws, priests, and the war. The most awful of names was sometimes taken in vain. The company was less at supper. The talk turned on harvests, salmon, the cunning and familiarity of dogs, goats, tame deer, &c. There was a disagreeable country gentleman there. No urbanity in his manners; his address blunt and abrupt; his visage hard, and unmodified by sentiment, as if it were carved on wood. . . . He talked much, and told trifling stories. He said that in the spring months he had seen wheat growing in the woolly backs of sheep, and shooting up green. These sheep had been sometimes in the threshing-floor, where the corn probably got into their fleeces. Came home and closed the day.

*Dec. 7. Saturday night*; must I exclaim "*Diem perdidit*?" Whether I have lost *this* or not, I believe I have not saved so many as the man who uttered that regretful sentiment. I rose somewhat earlier than usual. With conscious pain I neglected prayer till late in the day,—late indeed! Did not walk all the day; passed most of it in a mixture of listless fancies and painful reflections. Another unsuccessful attempt at epistolary writing. Surely my mind is declining into absolute sterility. Toward evening read over again part of Dr. Moore's "*Journal of a Residence in France*." Have lately seen elegant por-

traits of some of the great Conventionists, and still fall asleep and awake with their images and their names on my fancy. Wish to emulate them in some important respects. . . . Adjusted some of the exteriors for to-morrow. But what has become of the most important part? I hope the last great day will have better days than this to disclose, in the account of my life!

*Dec. 8.* Sunday night. I hold in recollection the first sensation that I felt on awaking (about seven o'clock), and I see something guilty connected with it. It quickly struck me, "I have to preach to-day;" and the thought was displeasing. It ought not to be thus. In part the reason was, I suppose, that I had not yet begun to form either of my sermons. I sat up in bed awhile, and caught some very considerable ideas. Ascended the pulpit at the usual time. My text, "And Pilate said, What is truth?" My mind fertile and expansive. . . . After it, went to see a respectable friend confined at home. . . . Had just an hour to study my afternoon sermon. It was tolerably sensible and pertinent, but tame. In the morning I was on wings; this afternoon, only walked. Some of the sentiments, however, had the merit of being proper, without being common (Matt. v. 8). At seven o'clock heard a sensible sermon from young Feltus. Took particular notice of the small drops on the damp wall, each of which collected a few oblique rays into a focus. Feel a disposition to continue a preacher, and to excel . . .

Foster returned once more to Yorkshire, in February, 1796, where he continued till his removal to Chichester.

## LETTERS.

## X. TO MR. H. HORSFALL.

*Newcastle, Sept. 20, 1792.*

. . . . What an insipid thing this world of mankind is ! How few we find whom we can at all wish to make one's intimate, inseparable friends ! How trifling, too, are the efforts and productions of the human mind ! I often wonder how it happens that my own mind, or any other mind, cannot any moment blaze with ideas superior to the most admirable of Young or Shakspeare. The whole system of human attainments, pleasures, and designs, sometimes strikes me as a confused mass of inanity. Almost everything carries some glaring mark of deficiency or meanness. Ought not *love*, for instance, in order to deserve any regard, to be equal for a perpetuity, to the inexpressible delight of some peculiarly auspicious moments, which return perhaps seldom in a person's life ; and though they entrance the heart, wound, by instantly quitting it. . . . My friend, I believe we must tread a little longer the dull round ; the day will come that is destined to set our souls at large. Happy that the soul possesses one power—Immortality ; which, though it seems at present to slumber in the breast, will at last awake in full vigor, and take vengeance on this dull life, by bursting in a moment the hated chains that bind us to it. The day is short and wintry, but yet let it be improved. Let us take all its advantages before us, and we shall not regret the desert we thus leave barren behind ; nor shall we dread to see the close approaching. . . .

## XI. TO MR. H. HORSFALL.

*Newcastle, Oct. 2, 1792.*

. . . . You are now, I believe, in the last of your three years. I suppose you sometimes think of prospects ; and probably you have not often very clear ones. We must be both flung into the world, and perhaps very sufficiently tossed about. I often wonder where or how we shall in the event settle and rest. But let religion be the leading principle, and leave the rest, not to fate, but to God. I am totally unable to give you any satisfactory account of myself, or my present situation. I am one of those who can make themselves tolerably easy everywhere. I am well-treated, and have every accommodation that can be wished. But

you will say, this is not the thing; and I acknowledge it. Prosperity in religion, and public usefulness, are objects incomparably more important than simply personal conveniences, and circumstantial advantages. I seem nearly at a stand with respect to the adjustment of plans for futurity. Whether I am to be a preacher or not, I cannot tell. I do preach, however, sometimes with great fertility, sometimes with extreme barrenness of mind; insomuch that I am persuaded that no man hearing me in the different extremes, could, from my preaching, imagine it was the same speaker. I never write a line or a word of my sermons. There are some advantages, both with respect to liberty and appearance, attendant on a perfect superiority to notes. Sunday evening (a very wet, uncomfortable night) I preached to about eighteen or twenty auditors, the greatest sermon I ever made. It was from Rev. x., 5, 6, "And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth, lifted up his hand to heaven, and sware by him that liveth for ever and ever, &c., that there should be time no longer." I always know when I speak well or the contrary. . . . The subject was grand; and my imagination was in its most luminous habit. I am entirely uncertain whether the people will wish me to stay any longer than the three months. I have no reason to think they much desire it. The world is still a wide place, my friend. . . .

---

XII. TO MR. H. HORSFALL.

*Newcastle, Oct. 2, 1792.*

. . . . By this time I suppose your woods, and fields, and gardens, have nearly lost their charms. Such scenes are just becoming dreary; and I conjecture that your walks, whether solitary or with Mr. J. or G., are but short, or but few. The birds are assembled in flocks, and the trees are changing their color. Now you can moralize. You and I shall very soon experience a withering, languishing decline; and like nature around us, we too shall die. And surely with future prospects clear, it must be the highest felicity to quit this oppressed and clouded existence, and be transported into light and endless pleasures.

"Through what new scenes and changes must we pass!  
The wide, th' unbounded prospect lies before me,  
But shadows, clouds, and darkness, rest upon it"

Is the cell on the other side the orchard in a state as desolate and ruinous as it was when I saw it last? What a number of hours I have spent there! sometimes praying, sometimes attempting to study sermons, which at that period I felt a task of very great difficulty indeed. And many hours I have spent there in reveries, literary projects, calculations of improvement in a given future time, mortifying contrasts of the actual



and possible improvement of time and advantages. My conduct to this moment has by no means realized the designs and hopes with which my breast has often glowed in that humble, but favorite mansion. The emotions of religion, of something like mental greatness, and of *love*, have alternately inspired and perplexed my bosom in that pensive recess, which is now, perhaps, left to those mysterious beings, who, like him that haunted it before, are peculiarly attached to a dark and melancholy solitude. . . . At some moments life, the world, mankind, religion, and eternity, appear to me like one vast scene of tremendous confusion, stretching before me far away, and closed in shades of the most awful darkness ;—a darkness which only the most powerful splendors of Deity can illumine, and which appears as if they never yet had *illumined* it. But still, life and the world were made for man ; and I, as a man, am designing to try what they are, what they can yield, and to what great, important purpose they may be rendered subservient. Let us awake, my friend, and look around us, and ask ourselves, Whence we are coming, and whither we are going ; and then each of us address himself, “Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might.” Let us survey the sphere in which we have to move, and inquire how far our efforts and our influence may be extended. I think we shall come at the point at last. We shall learn what is truth, what is duty, and what is happiness ; and where the gracious assistance is to be obtained by which we shall be *empowered* to understand the one, and perform the other, and attain and enjoy the third. I have entirely lost myself ; but I believe I am writing to H. Horsfall, and I hope two sheets will convince him that I am his friend, and that I wish him to be wise, and useful, and estimable.

---

XIII. TO MR. H. HORSFALL.

*Newcastle, Oct. 2, 1792.*

. . . . A correspondent of genius and observation might give you an amusing account of Newcastle ; but such qualifications are but in a small degree mine. The town is an immense, irregular mass of houses. There are a few fine uniform streets ; but the greater number exhibit an awkward succession of handsome and wretched buildings. The lower part of the town, as being in the bottom of a valley, is dirty in an odious degree. It contains thousands of wretched beings, not one of whom can be beheld without pity or disgust. . . . The general characteristic of the inhabitants seems to be a certain roughness, expressive at once of ignorance and insensibility. . . . I know little of the dissenters in general. I was one evening lately a good deal amused at the Presbyterian or Scotch meeting, by the stupidity of their psalms—the grimace of the clerk—the perfect insignificance of the parson—and the silly, un-

meaning attention of a numerous auditory. . . . But *our* meeting for amplitude and elegance ! I believe you never saw its equal. It is, to be sure, considerably larger than your lower school ; but then so black, and so dark !\* It looks just like a conjuring-room, and accordingly the ceiling is all covered with curious, antique figures to aid the magic. That thing which they call the *pulpit* is as black as a chimney ; and, indeed, there is a chimney-piece, and very large old fire-case behind it. There is nothing by which the door of this same *pulpit* can be fastened, so that it remains partly open, as if to invite some good person or other to assist you when you are in straits. My friend *Pero*, whom I have mentioned before, did me the honor one Sunday to attempt to enter ; but, from some prudential notion, I suppose, I signified my will to the contrary by pulling-to the door, and he very modestly retired. Yet I like this pulpit mightily ; 'tis so much the reverse of that odious, priestly pomp which insults your eyes in many places. I hate priestly consequence and ecclesiastical formalities. When I order a new coat I believe it will not be black. In such a place as this it would be unnatural to speak *loud*, and consequently there cannot be a great degree of exterior animation. I believe my manner is always cool ; this is not so happy, I confess ; but it is nature, and all nature's opponents will be vanquished. . . . Paper fails—so here then concludes our letter ; and I remain, much at your service,

THE KNIGHT OF THE ENCHANTED PEN.

---

XIV. TO MR. H. HORSFALL.

Newcastle, Oct. 4, 1792.

. . . . If I were with you, I should set you an example of temperance, which you will find it a piece of self-denial to imitate. "He that needs least is likest the gods," said Socrates, you know ; and I have only to wish that Socrates were now alive, to be convinced it is possible for others to carry philosophy as far as himself. If Socrates and I, and the Delphic oracle, had flourished all at the same time, would not the *last* have made a difficulty which of the two should be pronounced the wisest of men ? or, at least, should not I have come in for the *second place*, if superior age and experience had at last given one step of precedence to my brother sage ?

So far I had written on Thursday last, when the genius-enchanter who has of late presided over my pen, and who sometimes inspirits it with fancy, and sometimes loads and trammels it with dulness, struck it

\* The sombre appearance was owing, in part, to the old oak wainscoting ; the pulpit also was of the same material. At one end of the room, the figures "1485" rudely carved, probably marked the date of its erection.

with such a cold and deadly charm that I could write no farther. 'Tis now Monday—and I have heard nothing from you or from Brearley. You are, to be sure, the most niggardly class of correspondents that ever lived; but as I love to assert independence, I will show that I can write whether you do or not. Odd fellows that you are—perhaps when I see you again, you will not *speak* neither. But I promise you I will make up your deficiencies; when I open my mouth in earnest, I assure you none of you bachelors shall be able to close it. I'll trumpet your characters with a vengeance! You shall hear how eloquently, and how sarcastically too, I can inveigh against stupidity, and insensibility, and unmeaning gravity, and important reserve, and all your ridiculous characteristics. Depend on it, I shall spread your *virtues* to the sun, and constrain even yourselves to behold them. I am always glad when I can catch a subject to talk about, and fortunately, in this respect, I shall be at no loss the next time I see you. Every trait of the face, every motion of the lips, every oddity in dress, and every word you pronounce, will afford me some curious thought; and thus I shall be able to tease you on every side with incessant remarks, some of which you shall not be able to understand, and others you will not like. Such treatment faithless and idle correspondents always deserve, and such politeness they shall always find me fairly disposed to exhibit. . . . Last week Mr. Fishwick and I rode to Tynemouth. We had two most noble horses, which carried us about nine miles an hour. I could boast of having nearly "drawn empyreal air," since sometimes in the course of the ride I had almost got above this atmosphere of ours. You would have been highly pleased with the grand view of the sea which I that day enjoyed. . . . Hearing nothing from you, I am entirely left to indulge my conjectures. I may continue to wonder whether you are alive or dead; whether you are tracing the paths of learning forward or backward; whether you are asleep or awake; whether you are married or free; whether you remember me or have forgotten me; whether you wish any more letters, or you had rather see a ghost; in short, whether you are the same man I once knew and esteemed, or, as H. Horsfall, you exist no more.

A fine young man, the son of Mr. Whitfield the Baptist preacher, of whom you have heard, has just been with me here in my chamber for a long time, and a most agreeable evening we have passed. He is a youth about twenty, of worthy principles and character, and of an ingenuous, sensible, and affectionate spirit. He has been recounting to me the scenes of past life, and pensively recalling several tender affairs. On the subject of the uncertainty of future prospects, our feelings seem very similar. . . . My quarter of a year will soon be finished; I know not what will be the result—I know not what I *wish* to be the result.

## XV. TO MR. H. HORSFALL.

Newcastle, Oct. 10, 1792.

No letter from Mr. Horsfall: I am left, therefore, to proceed without interruption. 'Tis true I have nothing of consequence to say; but there are some people to whom it is all the same whether one talk like a man of sense or a fool. They can hear a parson showing away in powder and ruffles—the quack doctor haranguing on diseases and pills—the veteran “shouldering his crutch, and telling how fields are won”—the barber edging his razor with his jests—the young lady giving new interest to a tender subject by the remarks which her feelings prompt—and the old wench telling a story of weddings and of witches,—all with the same undisturbed tranquillity and dulness. Virtue may triumph, or wickedness blaspheme; distress may supplicate and weep; injured innocence may remonstrate; industry may reprove, or gratitude may bless; the philosopher may reason, and the idiot may rave;—what is it all to them? The curious and the novel cannot seize attention; the grand finds no upper story above the kitchen-apartments of their minds; the tender cannot awaken torpid sensibility; and the pathetic rebounds a league from their shielded hearts. All that I mean by this bustling page is, that there are *some* to whom it signifies nothing whether one writes or speak sense or nonsense. Mind, I do not say that *you* are one of them. I only mean to say, that idle, inattentive correspondents deserve to be punished twice a week with a nonsensical discourse on nonsense.

I have just received a most pleasing letter from Mr. Hughes. He is still unmarried, and still the only tutor of the Academy. He flatters me by telling me that he feels the loss of me. I still admire him as much as ever. Each letter I have received from him indicates that energy of mind which genius alone can inspire. I shall to the end of life congratulate myself on having become acquainted with him. If I have attained any enlargement of ideas, I am in a very great degree indebted to him for the advantage. I should be most happy to see him again. . . . Do you read novels still? I sometimes think I will read no more; so many of them are romantic, and so many insipid. Besides, is there any such thing as learning the art or the science of *feeling*? I think the person who, without reading novels, would not be amiable and worthy, will never become such by reading them. I am too little in the habit of reading anything; I must reform my plan.

You recollect the *wavering motion* I used to have in reading or studying. I have it still, and I find it very injurious to my breast, but I know not how to get quit of it. I am anxious to be free from every disagreeable habit. How desirable a thing it is to be unexceptionable in all points. I hope it will not be long before I see you. The wintry season, I am afraid, will prevent the repetition of the *midnight ramble*. Really it was

a pleasant adventure to me. . . . But at any rate we will conjure up a little gaiety, I hope. . . .

---

XVI. TO MR. H. HORSFALL.

Newcastle, Nov. 9, 1792.

. . . . I think I used, when at Brearley, to express a degree of aversion to *children*; now, on the contrary, I seem to like them much. Yesterday evening I passed at the house of one of the most respectable of the people here; and spent almost half of the time in playing with two little girls. I assisted their pranks, and danced them about. I verily believe I should be no contemptible nurse. Lately I received a charming letter from Mr. Hughes; and yesterday I despatched for him a whole sheet of post paper, written very full and close, and design to follow it with another, in a similar style, in a few days.

From my last to Mr. Fawcett, jun., you have perhaps heard the conclusion of the affair of Hull, and my present situation at Newcastle. I have nothing in expectation but returning to Yorkshire. . . . I abominate Hebden-bridge as much as you can do; but I shall, in case of being at Lanes, be near you, and Brearley and Mount—circumstances in the highest degree pleasing. Christmas will not be distant in prospect at the time I expect to reach you; and then you gentlemen will be at leisure; and if I am with you, I promise you will find me not the least forward, gay, and mischievous of the *posse*. What must it be that our wits united will not be capable of contriving? and what contrivance that our temerity will not be able to execute? Mr. G., sagacious and firm; Mr. —, delicately neutral (to serve as a ballast to our motions); you, regular and assiduous; myself, airy and romantic. Depend upon it the world will hear of us.

. . . . There is scarcely any enterprise from which, in speculation and fancy, I shrink. My object shall be, through life, the *greatest good*, and I hold myself, and will ever hold myself, at liberty to seek it in *any line* that appears most promising; and so to change one line for another, when another more advantageous presents itself. Reason dictates not the superstitious notion that when you have applied yourself to one engagement, you must at all events adhere to it in life and death. Let the great design be conducted onward with ardor, but it may be conducted through various paths. You will tell me, that "he who has set his hand to the plough must not look back." Well, in this determination yourself cannot be firmer than I am. There is only one principle on which a good and a wise man can act, only one great end to pursue; but let not prescription interfere with reason and experiment in selecting the means. Preachers, like the poor, we are certain of "having always with us;" but characters of a description which I can conceive are seen

so seldom that they appear phenomena. Let prejudice and custom forbear to condemn, or know there are spirits that dread not their award. Let not the displeasure of Heaven be denounced on designs which heaven will approve. . . .

---

XVII. TO MR. H. HORSFALL.

*Newcastle, Nov. 12, 1792.*

WHAT art thou doing, most incorrigible of men? Once and again have I besought thee to write, but thou writest not. Is it that paralytic chains have confined thy hand? Is it that thou sleepest the perpetual sleep of Endymion? Is it that thy evil genius tears in pieces all the letters thou writest? Is it that thy preceptor hath taken away all thy pens and ink, that thou mayest be compelled better to mind thy book? . . . Message after message have not I sent? but, like that blustering Jehu of old, thou saidst to each of my messengers, "Get thee behind me," nor condescendest to return one word of reply. Unrighteous fellow that thou art; thou renderest not to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, for know thou that I am a man of high respectableness; neither reachest thou up to the honesty (low as that virtue is) of paying thy lawful debts; for but compare the number of letters thou hast received with the number of those thou hast written, and if thou hast sense to see the difference, thou wilt confess that I have unanswered claims on thee. What dost thou not deserve, thou ungrateful and idle dunce? . . . At night let evil dreams be awake, while thou sleepest! strange and grievous indeed, the mischances that will vex thy sleeping hour! when thou fanciest thyself in act to utter speech of earnest meaning, in a twink fieth thy tongue out of thy head! . . . or methinks, when thou imaginest thyself sat down to write Cupid's warm epistle, behold Death, with his bony hand, taketh hold of thy fingers, and maketh thee scrawl thy last will and testament! But dost thou begin to laugh at me? O thou graceless varlet! Anon, a more sober mood shall take thee. Best I should leave thee at present. But I will give thee a handful of grave reflexions, on subjects indifferent, which I have just caught in a cow-house, a place in which such men as thou are fittest always to dwell.

Is pleasure willing to keep her assignations with thee, equally in an open cow-house and a decorated parlor? Thou art a happy man.

Dost thou behold goodness, though accompanied with vulgarity, with complacence; and baseness, though arrayed in elegance, with disgust? Thou art a happy man.

Dost thou behold inferior talents without vanity, and superior ones without envy? Thou art a happy man.

While thou art diffusing gay pleasure through thy social circle, and receiving pleasure from it, is thy cheerfulness undamped when thou ob-

servest Death drawing a chair, and taking a place among the company ?  
Thou art a happy man.

Dost thou pray, not because thou dreatest curses, but because thou  
hopest blessings ? Thou art a happy man.

Does not thy retrospect of regret cast a shade over thy prospects of  
hope ? Thou art a happy man.

Amidst prosperity, canst thou detect the futility of means which may  
have gained thee pleasure ? in misfortune, canst thou triumph in the  
rectitude of those measures of wisdom to which yet success may have  
been denied ? Thou art a happy man.

Let the windows of thy soul, like the windows of a house, not disclose  
everything *within* ; but, at the same time, admit notices of everything  
*without*.

Wiser reflexions than these, if thou choosest, thou mayest make ; if  
thou choosest, thou mayest impart them, too, for my improvement. But  
if thou still thinkest that I am unworthy to be the receptacle of thy  
wisdom, thou must give me leave to take myself out of thy presence, and  
to shut the door after me, while I am telling thee, that

I am, thine to chastise thee,

J. FOSTER.

#### XVIII. TO THE REV. THOMAS LANGDON.

*April 23, 1793.*

. . . I well know by the same sympathetic feeling what must be your  
sentiments of concern for France. Its situation is indeed alarming. Still  
I cannot but hope that France has a triumph yet to come. I consider  
the tempestuous horror that now overspreads the hemisphere as the  
prelude to a long and effulgent day. It is most consolatory to reflect,  
that religion, like an angel walking among the ranks of guilty men, still  
untainted and pure, retains, amidst all these black and outrageous evils,  
the same benign and celestial spirit, and gives the same independent and  
perpetual pleasures. The happiness of the good seeks not the smile of  
guilty power, nor dreads its frown. Let a Christian philosophy, there-  
fore, elevate all our speculations, calm our indignant feelings, and dignify  
all our conduct. . . .

#### XIX. TO THE REV. THOMAS LANGDON.

*Near Hebden-Bridge, March 24, 1796.*

I AM gratified in a persuasion that I am not entirely forgotten at Leeds.  
But I wish I had either less occasion or more ingenuity to make apology

for that long silence which might seem to indicate oblivion, because it always accompanies it. The obstinate tendency to delay, and to neglect writing, adheres to me still, though attended with a force of regret which should long ago have stimulated me to conquer it. I am not here acknowledging, and my heart firmly assures me that I need not acknowledge a want or decline of gratitude and affection. No.

I have been a little more than a year at Dublin. Promise and friendship required me to write to you, yet I certainly had little worth notice to communicate. I prosecuted a good while the undertaking on which I went thither, but relinquished it at last as insufficient and unpromising. I preached not once the whole year. I have been here now something more than a month, and am generally very busy about literary schemes. I may perhaps some time try the fate of an *author*.

I am informed you have resigned at least half the *cleric* character, by engaging in business. But I am informed, too, that you have now Mrs. Langdon at home. This sounds like the marvellous, indeed, but it is told on such authority that I am compelled to believe it. She will have the kindness to accept my sincere expressions of cordial affection and esteem. Little Mary, too; does she yet remember how I *frighted* her—and, if she remembers, can she forgive?

I intend in a while to venture on a walk to Leeds, and to make you a short sermon some Sunday morning; that is to say, if you will allow me to *ascend* the pulpit, and the people will allow me to remain there; for, in faith, my hair is—tied; and my waistcoat is—red. In the meantime I shall feel it very kind if you will favor me with half a sheet, to inform me whether you and your little family are well and happy; whether your business is attended with satisfactory success; whether our very excellent friends at Leeds are in the same circumstances as when I saw them; and whether the political spirit is quite evaporated. I should be very happy to be remembered to my friends, but cannot wish to subject you to the ceremonious formality of telling them so. . . .

---

The sentiments which Foster expresses in the foregoing letters on several important subjects were such as he maintained substantially in after life. The wish he avowed “to have a chapel of his own, without even the existence of what is called a church,” was not a transitory ebullition of juvenile sentiment. At a much later period, on the occasion of a violent dissension between two religious societies, which came under his immediate notice, he speaks of “obtaining plenty of confirmation, if he had needed it, of his old opinion, that churches are useless and mischievous institutions, and the sooner they are dissolved the better.”\* The

\* “I think,” Mr. Hughes replied, “your conclusion strange. To be



general tenor of his language implied a disapproval of any organized religious community. He believed that there was more of appearance than of reality in the union of church-membership ; and that, at all events, its benefits were greatly overrated. With the exception of public worship and the Lord's supper, he was averse to everything institutional in religion. He never administered, nor even witnessed in mature life (it is believed), the ordinance of baptism, and was known to entertain doubts respecting its perpetuity. In writing to a friend (Sept. 10, 1828) he says, "I have long felt an utter loathing of what bears the general denomination of the *church*, with all its parties, contests, disgraces, or honors. My wish would be little less than the dissolution of all church institutions, of all orders and shapes ; that *religion* might be set free, as a grand spiritual and moral element, no longer clogged, perverted, and prostituted by corporation forms and principles."

It would probably not be difficult to account for Foster's laying an almost exclusive stress on the personal convictions and spiritual state of the individual, and attaching a very subordinate value to the social and outward offices of the church. It was not to be expected that he would strongly feel the need of the social element in religion, or seek in its public exercises for companionship and sympathy, when, from constitutional shyness, combined with a very discriminating perception of character, and a high standard of personal attainment, he sought no such aid in other things. It might be anticipated, that (as was the case) his piety would be meditative, imaginative, self-enclosed, and in reference to his fellow men, self-dependent. The following remarks from his "*Journal*" will illustrate this part of his character. "I like all persons as subjects of speculation ; few indeed as objects of affection."\* "I cultivate society for some definite purpose ; either, first, for animated interest—affection ; or,

sure, if there were no churches, there would be no ecclesiastical squabbles ; and it may be added, if there were no states, there would be no civil broils ; and if there were no vegetable productions, there would be no deadly night-shade ; and if there were no water, no one would be drowned ; and if there were no fire, no one would be consumed ; and if there were no victuals, no one would be choked. Church-framers may egregiously err ; but when you scout the whole tribe, and all their works, tell us how we ought to proceed ; make out a strong case, and say at least that the way you would substitute would be free from the objections that cling to the old ways, and would secure greater advantages."

\* No. 529.

secondly, for utility—beneficent influence, even when I do not feel sentiment or complacency. For a middle state of feeling between these two (the acquaintance feeling) I have no faculty.”\* “One is not one’s genuine self; one does not disclose all one’s self to those with whom one has no intimate sympathy. One is therefore several successive, and apparently different, characters, according to the gradation of the faculties and qualities of those one associates with. I am like one of those boxes I have seen, enclosing several other boxes of similar form, though lessening size. The person with whom I have least congeniality sees only the outermost; another person has something more interesting in his character, he sees the next box; another sees still an inner one; but the friend of my heart alone, with whom I have a full sympathy, sees disclosed the innermost of all. The colors of these successive boxes may vary; my various characters may have various aspects, and so the several judgments formed of me by different persons may be various, even to contradiction, yet each be apparently true.”†

In the formation of his political opinions, Foster pursued, as far as his immediate connexions were concerned, a solitary course. His estimable tutor, Dr. Fawcett, had a settled reverence for the existing order of things, and a dread of innovation; while his younger friends were of temperaments better fitted to cool down his enthusiasm, than to render it more intense by the addition of their own. Perhaps the germ of his anti-aristocratical principles might have been discovered in the youthful indignation with which he reprobated the grasping selfishness of the landowners in his neighborhood. He usually finished his invectives by saying, “I would rather starve than receive anything at their hands.” The anticipations of a general political amelioration which the French Revolution excited in so many ardent and philanthropic spirits, made him a decided republican. But though he “never ceased to regard royalty, and all its gaudy paraphernalia, as a sad satire on the human race,”‡ his attachment to republicanism underwent some modification in the course of years. A deeper insight into human nature made him less sanguine of the beneficial working of *any* political system; he looked more to indivi-

\* No. 673.

† No. 607.

‡ Letter to John Purser, Esq., Feb. 22, 1842. “Not however,” Mr. F. adds, “that I am a violent republican. No form of government will be practically good, as long as the nations to be governed are in a controversy, by their vices and irreligion, with the supreme Governør.”

dual efforts—to education in the most comprehensive sense, and to the efficacy of Christian principles in the renovation of mankind. “While the nature of man is corrupt,” he remarks in his essay on the Epithet Romantic, “it will pervert even the very schemes and operations by which the world would be improved, though their first principles were pure as heaven ; and revolutions, great discoveries, augmented science, and new forms of polity will become in effect what may be denominated, the sublime mechanics of depravity.”

## CHAPTER III.

CHICHESTER—BATTERSEA—DOWNEND—LITERARY PURSUITS—ESSAY  
ON THE GREATNESS OF MAN—JOURNAL—LETTERS ON THE ME-  
TROPOLIS.

1797—1803.

EARLY in 1797 Mr. Foster was invited to become the minister of a General Baptist church at Chichester. He remained there about two years and a half, and applied himself with greater earnestness than at any former period to his ministerial duties; usually preaching three times on the Sunday, and in various ways striving to promote the piety and general improvement of the congregation. But though treated with much personal kindness, he met with little encouragement to prosecute his labors. A spirit of religious indifference seems to have pervaded the society; frequent deaths and removals reduced its numbers, and not long after his departure it became extinct. The chapel has since been only occasionally used by other denominations. Of Foster's hearers but few now survive who were then of an age to retain a recollection of his person and habits. A walk in the vicinity of the town is still known by his name; but his most favorite resort for meditation was the chapel, where the well-worn bricks of the aisles still exhibit the vestiges of his solitary paces to and fro by moonlight.

That no proposals to take the pastoral office were made to Mr. Foster, either at Dublin or Newcastle, will not appear surprising to the readers of the correspondence, in which he lays open his character and views with so much ingenuousness. His recluse habits, his peculiar style of preaching, less adapted, probably, than at any subsequent period to popular or useful effect, and especially the fluctuating, unconfirmed state of his own mind,—all these circumstances would conspire, with his latitudinarian opinion respecting churches, to render it unlikely that, though he would always secure the admiration and attachment of a select few, the general suffrage would be in his favor; or if it were, that he would accede to its decision.

It is, however, most interesting to mark his gradual advance, morally and intellectually, under a process of severe self-discipline, and, above all, the increasing intensity of his religious convictions. The disclosures made in his letters from Chichester and Battersea of the interior sentiments of his heart, the profound regrets, the earnest resolves, and the fervent aspirations after "perfection as it shines beauteous as heaven; and, alas! as remote," present an era in his spiritual life which no Christian mind can contemplate without the deepest sympathy.

It would be unpardonable not to notice the inestimable benefit derived by Foster from his friendship with Mr. Hughes; and it increases not a little the debt of gratitude due from the Christian community to that excellent man, that though his own authorship was limited to a few fugitive productions, and his sphere of duty was one of action rather than of meditation, he performed the noble office of stimulating the exertions and cherishing the piety of one of the most original and influential religious writers of his age.

From some passages in these letters it will be seen that Foster began very early the cultivation of his conversational powers, instead of leaving this invaluable instrument of social pleasure and improvement to the casual excitement of circumstances. The result was such as might be expected from a mind which was receiving constant accessions from observation and reflection. No one could be on terms of familiar intercourse with Foster, without being struck with his affluence of thought and imagery, and the readiness with which the most insignificant object or incident was taken as a kind of nucleus, on which was rapidly formed an assemblage of original remarks. There was scarcely any subject (except the purely scientific or philological) on which it was not enough simply to touch, and immediately the stream would gush forth.

But to return to the narrative. About Midsummer, 1799, Mr. Foster left Chichester, and resided for a time with Mr. Hughes, at Battersea. He explains the nature of his engagements in a letter to his friend Mrs. Mant, with whom he resided at Chichester. "In one way or another," he says,\* "I have been rather busy most of the time since I came hither. Many evenings I have spent in interesting company. I have preached several of the sab-

\* To Mrs. Mant, July 23, 1799.

baths, and made a journey of perhaps forty miles in the country to preach to *heathens*, at one place, in a sort of coal-hole; and to plain good saints at another, in a little shop. I stood behind the counter, and some of the candles hanging above touched my wig. I should extremely like to preach in this style every evening in the week. This was not a casual adventure of my own; there has been for some time past a regular plan, which they call a mission, in which a considerable number of preachers are employed to go round the country to obscure places, where the gospel scarcely ever went before, to endeavor to establish a kind of religious posts. For two weeks I have been engaged, and shall remain so for some time, in another piece of business, of which I had no expectation when I left you. The Company who made some time since an establishment at Sierra Leone in Africa, have brought to England twenty black boys to receive European improvements, in order to be sent back when they are come to be men, to attempt enlightening the heathen nations of Africa. They have been placed in a house at Battersea, for the present, till some kind of regular and permanent establishment shall be formed; and I have been requested, and have agreed, to take the care of them for a few months. You may then fancy me sitting in a master's chair, with a look of consequence, encircled with twenty-one black visages, pronouncing commands, asking questions, and *graciously* administering instructions—a most monstrous wise man compared with my pupils. Most of them have been several years instructed in a school at Sierra Leone before they came, and consequently speak English perfectly well. Their ages are chiefly from nine or ten to fifteen or sixteen. The domestic manager is an aged black woman, with her daughter. The elder is a singularly pious and happy woman. She has been in different parts of the world, has undergone severe trials, but professes to have felt, and evidently now feels, a degree of devout resignation and serenity most rarely to be met with. Just at present I have found it most convenient to board with her and her daughter, a girl of about, I should suppose, twenty.”

Writing again to the same friend, December 31, 1799, he says, “I am just about the end of my engagement with the Africans, with whom I had at first no expectation of continuing half so long. My successor is one of my own most particular friends, with whom I spent several years in Yorkshire. The places where we were born are not more than half a mile from each other. I shall now

have an interval of comparative leisure, which I must employ in writing my long neglected letters, and in studying a number of sermons to furnish myself for a preaching expedition, which I expect to make a month or two hence. But this severe season is miserably unfavorable to sedentary mental exercise. I have, too, passed so much time in pleasing society of late, that I am afraid I may not like solitude again as well as I used to do. The principal improvement I have gained here has been in respect of manners, conversation, habits, deportment, &c., &c., for I have had little time for reading or downright study. Nor, though I have frequently taken a walk into London, for the sake of hearing some distinguished preacher, have I seen anything at all of its wonderments, not even Fuseli's pictures from Milton, which cannot now be seen, as the exhibition is shut up a good while since."

Up to the period of leaving Chichester, Foster's intercourse with cultivated persons had been very limited. But on his removal to Battersea, and soon after in the neighborhood of Bristol, he was introduced to several individuals of refined taste and superior intelligence. It is said by those who then knew him, that his manners were vivacious, and his society in a high degree captivating; his conversation was ardent, intellectual, and imaginative, with no faint coloring of the romantic. His outward appearance was not thought by him so unworthy of care as in later life he looked on such matters, in relation to himself especially. At the residence of the late Samuel Favell, Esq., of Camberwell, he first met Miss Maria Snooke, "the friend" to whom his essays were addressed, who some years afterwards became his wife, and in that relation contributed so largely to his happiness by an extraordinary congeniality, which eminently fitted her to be his "domestic associate."

In 1800 he removed to the village of Downend, five miles from Bristol, where he preached regularly at a small chapel erected by Dr. Caleb Evans. Towards the close of the year he paid a visit to Mrs. Mant, at Chichester, to whom, on his return, he thus writes: "I am still in the same house, but shall remove almost immediately, I expect, into a quiet, retired house in the neighborhood, inhabited by a respectable and agreeable widow, who has several daughters. There I mean to devote myself to retirement and reflection. . . . When I left you, I walked, as I intended, to Portsmouth. I felt a pensiveness and oppression of heart from quitting you and the Westgate friends, which made

me glad of the solitude, the exercise, and the free air. The Dearlings were kind to me in an extreme degree during the whole of my visit. I sympathized with the feelings caused by their lamented loss. I spent three or four days at Portsmouth, where I met a cordially kind reception among my few friends. I preached on the Sunday. From Portsmouth I travelled, by Southampton, Salisbury, Devizes, Warminster, and Bath, to Bristol. The journey was slow, and, for the most, dull and unsocial. At Salisbury, indeed, where I had to remain at an inn from five in the evening till one or two in the morning, I passed this entire interval in the most vigorous exertion of talking, with a number of gentlemen of various characters, some of them sensible, and chiefly inhabitants of the town, on subjects of politics, morals, and literature. . . . I have formed no new acquaintance here. Coleridge is, I am told, returning from the north to reside near London."

In the autumn of 1801, Foster visited for the last time his friends and relatives in Yorkshire; he gives the following account of his journey in a letter to Mr. Hughes: "I travelled straightforward to my native place, without stopping, excepting the nights, on the road—a space of three days. Part of the country I passed through was more in the style of Eden than anything I ever saw, from the infinitude of fruits. I found my father, who is past seventy, in a very feeble state, but full as well as I expected. My mother is within a few years of that age, and very much declined since I saw her last. My brother has been married two or three years, and has a pretty little girl, with which I played, and was extremely delighted. That pleasure so often celebrated in visiting the scenes of nativity, childhood, and youth, I was never destined to feel. From whatever cause, I have had an intense antipathy to the place for many years, and felt no pleasure, with the exception of a wild, solitary vale or two, in retreading the ancient vestiges. Few local circumstances befriended the romantic feelings of my early youth; they did not therefore attach themselves to the place, but were enclosed within myself, and carried away. . . . I had quite a stranger's experience in respect of the inhabitants; they are so changed since I last saw the place, by the death of most of my old acquaintance, and the manhood of a multitude who then appeared children. Much cordiality was evinced by the generality, and especially by those who had at all cared about me before: this was some



small alleviation of the deep sombre that dyed all my perceptions. I preached several times with considerable *éclat* for Mr. Fawcett, who is much the same in each respect as ever. I did not go near Leeds, nor therefore see anything of Langdon, nor any others, besides the immediate neighborhood of my father's.

"In returning I stopped three or four pleasant days at Pershore, chiefly with Rowland, who is agreeably settled there. . . . [He] seems a respectable, a very respectable preacher, and is, for an orthodox man, of unparalleled candor. My reception was extremely friendly, both from him and the few others who well remembered me.

"I reached Downend at last, a day or two before Mrs. Cox, who had a little before seen you, and told me that you appeared lively and friendly, and that she had heard you make a transcendent sermon at Broad Street, the same, I believe, that I heard at Thornbury. . . . I was two or three times in Hall's company, and heard him preach once; I am any one's rival in admiring him. In some remarkable manner, everything about him, all he does or says, *is instinct with power*. Jupiter seems to emanate in his attitude, gesture, look, and tone of voice. Even a common sentence, when he utters one, seems to tell how much more he can do. His intellect is peculiarly potential, and his imagination robes, without obscuring, the colossal form of his mind. He made a grand sermon on the fear of death, though I was told it was not his very best. . . . He was specifically kind to me. . . . I have engaged in the monthly lecture in Bristol for the next year."

## LETTERS.

## XX. TO HIS PARENTS.

Chichester, March 27, 1797.

HONORED PARENTS,—I hope to attain in time the power which can create for itself interests and varieties which the place will not supply, and can therefore communicate something new while circumstances continue the same. I feel no considerable alteration in mine. I have seen nothing remarkable since I wrote; have heard nothing but those public events which you have likewise heard; have *done* nothing of great consequence. I have indeed *said* a number of new, and perhaps important things. I mean to recollect and write as many of them as I can for preservation; but my memory seems growing worse and worse. On this account I frequently now write out the outlines of my discourses, previous to speaking, a practice which I had long disused. I am become a little more acquainted with the people, and find them thus far very pleasing; but I do not need to be informed that the attention and politeness of a first acquaintance do not continue always. I resolve, however, to *merit* respect wherever I am, and then I shall at least possess *my own*. I know what are the qualities and conduct which deserve the esteem of society, and promote its happiness; and while each cause of irritation is absent, I can wonder that every mortal is not inclined to study the happiness of those around him, and that I myself have not, in some instances, made greater efforts and sacrifices for this object. Some time since I was most of the week, seven miles from here, at the house of a miller. . . . I read there with great pleasure the sermons of Fawcett, the presbyterian, of London. My own most successful compositions are considerably similar, but inferior to his. He is not indeed sufficiently evangelical. The two last weeks I passed with another family in the city, in which there are several very agreeable young people. I am conscious of having made an effort, a laborious effort, to render them some service. I read several books to them, and compelled myself to talk. I tried to communicate knowledge, and to excite a wish to attain it. To one of them particularly, a fine young woman, I lectured with all my might on the value of wisdom, the necessity of reflection, and the folly of dress, amusements, and trivial society. In such cases I always feel indignant at myself that I cannot absolutely compel conviction by a resistless force of argument. I never fail, however, to do my best, and to resolve to furnish myself with new and more cogent thoughts against the next occasion. . . . Since I came, one member of the society, a woman

with a large family, is dead. I was requested to make a funeral discourse, in doing which I was exempted from the task of speaking of the deceased, by being a total stranger. I never even saw her. I thought the sermon the most considerable I ever made. Writing to Mr. Hughes, I transcribed and sent him the introduction by way of return for his outline, which I had used. The text was, "The living know that they shall die."\* I experience the accustomed diversities of enlargement and con-

\* There can be little doubt that this introduction forms the first extract in the following communication from Mr. Hughes to the Editor of the (Edinburgh) *Missionary Magazine*, and inserted in the twenty-ninth number of that periodical, October, 1798.

*"To the Editor of the Missionary Magazine.*

"SIR,—I have had frequent occasion to remark, that while scepticism, error, indifference, and vagueness of belief, are the luxuriant produce of thoughtless minds, and of gay moments, nothing short of a fixed confidence, derived, if I may so speak, from the very centre of the gospel, can satisfy the man who, in the views of approaching death, sits in solemn judgment upon himself. The idle glare of a pompous philosophy, and the flattery of a deceitful heart, vanish, and some beamings of truth, some profitable regrets, some eager wishes, have been known to fill their place. These reflections are suggested by the following passages, extracted from the letter of an ingenious friend, whose speculations habitually hover over an undefined void, and feed upon a vexatious disappointment, their own creation. The extracts breathe the spirit of some happier hour; and should they be deemed likely to fix the undetermined, or to reclaim the wanderer, should they in any sense comport with the design of your miscellany, their insertion will much oblige your well-wisher,

"THEOLOGUS.

**"REFLECTIONS ON DEATH.**

"The records of time are emphatically the history of death. A whole review of the world, from this hour to the age of Adam, is but the vision of an infinite multitude of dying men. During the more quiet intervals, we perceive individuals falling into the dust, through all classes and all lands. Then come floods and conflagrations, famines, and pestilence, and earthquakes, and battles, which leave the most crowded and social scenes silent. The human race resemble the withered foliage of a wide forest; while the air is calm, we perceive single leaves scattering here and there from the branches; but sometimes a tempest, or a whirlwind, precipitates thousands in a moment. It is a moderate computation which supposes a hundred thousand millions to have died since the exit of righteous Abel. Oh! it is true that ruin hath entered the creation of God! that sin has made a breach in that innocence which fenced man round with immortality! and even now the great spoiler is ravaging the world. As mankind have still sunk into the dark gulf of the past, history has given buoyancy to the most wonderful of their achievements and characters, and caused them to float down the stream of time to our own age. It is well; but if, sweeping aside the pomp and deception of life, we could draw from the last hours and death-beds of our ancestors all the illuminations, convictions, and uncontrollable emotions with which they have quitted it, what a far more affecting history of man should we possess! Behold all the gloomy apartments opening, in which the wicked have died; contemplate first the triumph of iniquity, and here behold their close; witness the terrific faith, the too late repentance, the prayers suffocated by despair and the mortal

traction in public speaking. It is still an interesting problem with me, whether zealous animation be attainable when nature has not given it; but I am yet willing to persuade myself that it is. I hold it my business to make the experiment. This animation *must* prevail as far as devotion does; and who shall mark the limits beyond which devotion shall not prevail?

I often contemplate, and with the due amazement, the characters of Moses, and Elijah, and St. Paul, and St. John, with the rest who have

agonies! These once they would not believe; they refused to consider them; they could not allow that the career of crime and pleasure was to end. But now truth, like a blazing star, darts over the mind, and but shows the way to that 'darkness visible' which no light can cheer. Dying wretch! we say in imagination to each of these, Is religion true? Do you believe in a God, and another life, and a retribution? 'O yes!' he answers, and expires! But 'the righteous hath hope in his death.' Contemplate through the unnumbered saints that have died, the soul, the true and extinguishable life of man, charmed away from this globe by celestial music, and already respiring the gales of eternity! If we could assemble in one view all the adoring addresses to the Deity, all the declarations of faith in Jesus, all the gratulations of conscience, all the admonitions and benedictions to weeping friends, and all the gleams of opening glory, our souls would burn with the sentiment which made the wicked Balaam devout for a moment, and exclaim, 'Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his.' These revelations of death would be the most emphatic commentary on the revelation of God. What an affecting scene is a dying world! Who is that destroying angel whom the Eternal has employed to sacrifice all our devoted race? Advancing onward over the whole field of time, he hath smitten the successive crowds of our hosts with death; and to us he now approaches nigh. Some of our friends have trembled, and sickened, and expired, at the signals of his coming; already we hear the thunder of his wings: soon his eye of fire will throw mortal fainting on all our companies; his prodigious form will to us blot out the sun, and his sword sweep us all from the earth; 'for the living know that they shall die.'

"Such are my friend's reflections on death. I subjoin the following as the more affecting statement of his own feelings; hoping it may serve to correct that lawless elation, and that superiority to evangelical control, which in our ingenious youth we have so often reason to deplore.

"I know not, I wonder how I shall succeed in mental improvement, and especially in religion. Oh, it is a difficult thing to be a Christian! I feel the necessity of reform through all my soul. When I retire into thought, I find myself environed by a crowd of impressive and awful images; I fix an ardent gaze on Christianity, assuredly the last best gift of Heaven to men; on Jesus the agent and example of infinite love; on time as it passes away; on perfection as it shines beauteous as heaven, and alas! as remote; on my own beloved soul which I have injured, and on the unhappy multitude of souls around me; and I ask myself, Why do not my passions burn? Why does not zeal arise in mighty wrath, to dash my icy habits in pieces, to scourge me from indolence into fervid exertion, and to trample all mean sentiments in the dust? At intervals I feel devotion and benevolence and a surpassing ardor; but when they are turned towards substantial, laborious operations, they fly and leave me spiritless amid the iron labor. Still, however, I confide in the efficacy of persisitive prayer; and I do hope that the Spirit of the Lord will yet come mightily upon me, and carry me on through toils, and suffering, and death, to stand in Mount Zion among the followers of the Lamb!"

formed the first and noblest rank of mankind. I have wondered whether there is, in the nature of things, an impossibility of ever approaching them. But I have concluded with warmth that all things should be attempted, should be suffered, should be sacrificed, in the divine emulation of imitating them. I am happy to believe that great and unknown assistance is imparted by Heaven to the zealous of such a cause. Oh that permanence could be given to the ardent feelings which these contemplations, at intervals, inspire !

If I ever, as to the speaking part, perform well in public, I shall have surmounted prodigious difficulty. Reading aloud is a perfect purgatory. My tongue rubs against my teeth like Balaam's ass against the wall, and will not, cannot, perform the movement which its master requires. Yet for the sake of improvement, I mean frequently to read to Mrs. Kingsford, if she will hear me. I have plenty of books at command.

Next to an improved and happy state of my own mind, what I most want, and here probably must not find, is a companion of originality and genius, with whom I might expatiate on the intellectual field, and interchange sentiments which the majority of men would not understand. I should be greatly happy to be within reach of Mr. Hughes. My life hitherto has been most inauspicious to the most interesting kinds of human attachment. . . . I am tolerably social ; partly from inclination, and partly from a consideration of propriety ; yet solitude is my paradise. Besides, necessity will concur with disposition, if my literary projects are prosecuted into any success. I am sorry that the circumstances and very small number of young persons that are likely to come within my acquaintance here, give at present no encouragement to try my favorite plan of a lecture, or whatever else it might be called. I observe, too, that if I were to execute it, it must be very different from what it ought to be in a country place like Hebden-Bridge, on account of the very different circumstances and habits of the young people in a city. Folly has a much greater variety of modes than absolute vice can take. Here I must lecture against artificial manners, and insincerity, and affectation, and ceremony, and cards, and the whole routine of polished insipidity for which this place is remarkable.

The clergy here are for the most part, it seems, a very worthless clan, though all people seem to agree in marking one honorable exception, highly honorable for his talents, virtuous conduct, liberality, and zealous activity ; his name is Walker. He was one of my hearers yesterday evening. I should not be sorry to become acquainted with him, but I am little inclined to *court* any man's acquaintance.

. . . . I and a young man of the family I was with last week, propose a week or two hence to make a forced march to Salisbury, between forty and fifty miles from here, principally to see the famous Stonehenge. I am endeavoring, wherever I am, to examine every object with the keenest investigation, conscious that this is the best of all methods for obtaining knowledge fresh and original. It was by this method that Dr.

Johnson was empowered to display human characters in his Rambler, and Thomson to describe Nature in his Seasons. It is impossible to adapt many kinds of instruction with precision, without that minute and uncommon knowledge which observation alone can supply.

I frequently form conjectures about you and my friends in the neighborhood, all in vain. There are indeed no more young marriages left to be imagined (unless it be that of Thomas); "I alone am escaped." How different it is from the time when Greaves, Fawcett, Horsfall, and myself were all associate boys, touched with that kind of sentiment which hope alone gives;—possession, I believe, has no sentiment so animated. Respecting them there seems nothing to imagine; nothing to inquire, nothing to learn. They have obtained what they wanted in life, and now are quiet, and wish to sit down free from further change. My feelings are almost infinitely different. And though it would be pleasing to see a kind of certainty of some happy circumstances in future, yet I am very far indeed from wishing to discern through the gloom, the wall, the limit, that is to bound my scope. I have long wished, as one of the sublimest means of enjoyment, to attain a habitual indifference to life itself, and am firmly of opinion that to a good man there can be nothing so happy in life as a noble occasion of throwing it away. Thomas is always remembered by me with affectionate regard. I constantly wish and pray for the happiness of you all, and shall be glad to learn how far you possess it. . . .

---

XXI. TO HIS PARENTS.

*Chichester, December 6, 1797.*

HONORED PARENTS,—I have just been admiring the marvellous construction of the mind, in the circumstance of its enabling me, as I sit by my candle here, in a chamber at Chichester, to view almost as distinctly, as if before my eyes, your house, the barn, the adjacent fields, neighboring houses, and a multitude of other objects. I can go through each part of the house, and see the exact form of the looms, tables, maps, cakes of bread, and so on, down to my mother's thimble. Yet I still find myself almost three hundred miles off. At present I take no notice of the things about me; but perhaps at some future time, at a still greater distance, I may thus review in imagination the room in which I now write, and the objects it contains; and I find that few places where I have continued some time, can be thus recollected without some degree of regret; particularly the regret that I did not obtain and accomplish all the good that was possible at that place, and that time. Will it be so when hereafter I recollect *this* time, and *this* place? I have just been reading an author who maintains, with very great force of reasoning, *that no man could, in any situation, have acted differently from what he has*

done. Though I do not see how to refute his arguments, I feel as if I ought to differ from his opinion. He refers to Jonathan Edwards as a powerful advocate of the same doctrine. He says such an expression as "*I will exert myself*," is absurd. It is an expression which, notwithstanding, I am inclined to repeat, as I view the wide field of duty before me. My hope of success, however, with respect to some of the objects of exertion, is but small. I preach now three times on the Sunday; I study my sermons more than in any former season. They are, too, I believe, more than in any former season, what may be termed evangelical. For the most part I think them considerably good; but I do not form this judgment from their *effect*; that appears to be very small. Religion here seems to have been forced into an unnatural and accommodating mixture with the world, from which no representations can reclaim it. How far the prevailing spirit may have an influence on *myself*, I cannot exactly know, unless I were to pass into the sphere of an opposite influence. It must be great energy that can absolutely vanquish the influences of situation. I find, at least, that I have not lost the power of seeing what is wrong in others, and feeling what is wrong in myself. I told you that the "old people in the society were dying fast away." Two of them (women) are dead since I wrote so. One of them was a person of property, and what was called one of the principal people here. She had considerable sense, was a violent democrat, &c., &c.; but I remember her with but a very small degree of respect. She always treated me in a very friendly manner; but she was a bigot and a miser. I tell the people that I deem covetousness one of the very worst of vices. But those on whom particularly I wish to impress this truth "never heed me," as the old fellow said about wasting the gunpowder. The other was a person of a very good, inoffensive kind of character. I made what is called a funeral sermon on her account. The object of it was to answer this simple question, "What is it to be prepared to die?" I attempted to show that a complete preparation for death must consist in three plain things; first, faith in Jesus Christ; second, a devout and pure state of mind; third, a truly Christian or virtuous conduct. I learnt that the sermon was one of the most popular I have made. The mortality in the society within the last two years, has been extraordinary. There are no substitutes in the same families, to fill the abdicated places. Instead of that, some of the surviving relatives have removed to distant situations, and left a melancholy and chilling show of vacant seats. I think the society is hastening to dissolution with a progress that no revival is likely to retard. Fate has fixed her seal. I was one Sunday, about a month since, at Portsmouth, and preached twice. I fell among two or three uncommonly agreeable and sensible families; but the society and congregation there are in the same frost-bitten state as here. I continue in health, meet with a continuance of friendly attention, live still in the same manner, have no want of books, and have a very decent wardrobe. I do not employ much time in visits, because

generally I do not find that I can employ it to any valuable purpose. I used to tell you when in *Lanes*, that I never lost time when in company; and this was true. But here company is generally of a kind to make me most sincerely regret that I cannot visit and talk at *Carrs*. For the most part I find conversation a mere chat about trifles, and the custom is so obstinate that I can seldom succeed to make it anything else. I believe I rarely fail to make an effort this way. Often I make a very vigorous one, not only for the sake of conscience, but because my mind, accustomed to interesting sentiments, needs them to gratify its taste, which nauseates insipidity. Often I have had occasion to look round on a company with mingled wonder and contempt, to observe the conversation for ever stealing away from the neighborhood of important subjects, to seek its element among the most insignificant ones. The fault is not mine; There are few articles in which I feel myself so clear of guilt. Probably I told you that the situation gave me no scope for executing my project of a course of addresses to young persons. Some time since, when thinking of one particular young person, it occurred to me that it might be of some use to arrange my reflections on some important subjects in a series of letters, and address them to that individual. The person is a young woman, the daughter of one of the poor members of the society, a person to whom such a service, if I can render it a service, will be very seasonable. If I continue here long enough to finish the series, and if it be tolerably satisfactory to myself, it may be possible to make a further use of it.\*

I sometimes feel convictions, impressive even to violence, of the duty of doing all the good I possibly can. The single idea of philanthropy is inspiring and grand; but I perceive that the practical detail of toils and self-denials opens a view very different from the first flash of the subject. Certainly, however, I have no determination more fixed and animated than that of devoting myself to the service of mankind. My father's favorite sentence is cordially mine, "The noblest motive is the public good." I am willing to indulge a favorable conjecture respecting your health, your circumstances, and business; but I feel it would be absurd to be sanguine. What is the opinion about national matters among you now? Does any one persist to dissuade from thinking of them; and talk of leaving them to the management of those who are appointed to manage them, &c.? The crisis seems fast approaching that will *compel* to think and to feel, and perhaps to act too. The infatuation of thoughtless acquiescence has prevailed wretchedly too long. Fox has assured us that to talk any longer about *parliament* is idle; and that the nation must exert itself, or prepare to suffer the consequences of its opprobrious tameness. My reflections are sometimes very serious on the question of what would be my duty in the event of a French army appearing on our plains. In all events I commend you and myself to Heaven.

\* Journal, Nos. 500 and 734.



## XXII. TO HIS PARENTS.

Chichester, Feb. 12, 1798.

HONORED PARENTS,— . . . I wish I could inform you of wonderful changes in myself,—changes which I have long projected, which I believe to be possible, which are extremely necessary, which I am still laboring, but of which the advances are but gradual and but slow. Yet I am highly pleased to feel that they *are* somewhat advancing. I am acquiring something of that *military discipline of thought*\* and action, which I suppose will be indispensable through the whole of life; and in this supposition I am glad that life is but short. I sometimes study, and pray, and talk, with such an exceeding ardor, that if it could but be constant, I should soon become an eminent Christian, and an eminent man. My great fault is a tendency (I hope not an incorrigible tendency) to indolent languor. The attainment, if possible, of habitual energy, I feel to be an urgent duty, and an exceeding difficulty. For this purpose I endeavor to assemble a host of impressive considerations around my mind to compel it to activity. It is very unfortunate that many of the circumstances that surround me are not of a kind to act in alliance with these stimulating considerations. A situation where there is nothing lively, will, to a certain degree, inevitably infect one with its dullness. There are situations in the world that would probably aid and augment that fire of mind which the influence of my present one rather tends to quench. But I shall not abandon the generous strife. I still possess what may be called invariable health; my diet continues of the same inexpensive kind; water is still my drink. I congratulate myself often on the superiority in this respect which I shall possess in a season of difficulty, over many that I see. I could, if necessary, live with philosophic complacency on bread and water, on herbs, or on sour milk with the Tartars.

. . . . I have a coat sufficiently grave—a dark brownish grey—with a black velvet collar. Every article of clothing is here expensive in the extreme, and yet nowhere can it be more necessary to dress well. It is what may be called a very elegant and fashionable place, and not large enough, like London, Dublin, Bristol, &c., for a man to lose himself in it, so as to be easy and unnoticed. At present I see very little indeed of what is called company. The persons are very few whom my ecclesiastical engagement brings me acquainted with, and I am little inclined to seek many others.

I am beginning to learn the French language, with a very sensible

\* "A rational repast;  
Exertion, vigilance, a mind in arms,  
*A military discipline of thought*,  
To foil temptation in the doubtful field;  
And ever-waking ardor for the right."

emigrant priest for my tutor. Such an accomplishment may be of special use ere while. The course of my preaching and reading does not materially alter. I have spent rather too many hours in bed this winter, but shall not so mispend many more; I mean when it becomes warmer to go and bathe and swim in the sea.

I lately heard from Mr. Hughes, who, with his family, are as well as usual. He has abandoned his education project. He expresses himself pleased and useful in his preaching work. He is engaged in a kind of mission, or plan of travelling to different places to preach, in the county of Surrey. He writes in a strain of animated piety, and exhorts me to the same. . . . .

My thoughts often revert to political subjects. The ominous aspect of the times both illustrates and augments their importance. If these subjects had gained the general attention of the people sufficiently much, and sufficiently early, affairs would not have come to the execrable condition we now behold them in. While men have slept the tares have been sown, and now threaten to yield a harvest of death. The consequences of contented ignorance can never be good. The enormous guilt of such a war without, and of such oppression and corruption within, is chiefly chargeable on the thoughtless indifference of the people at large. If a nation will not be vigilant, it must be content to be betrayed. No part of the fault is mine.

In this quarter opinions differ as to an invasion. The intention of the French, however, seems evidently to be most serious and determined. If so, unless the elements again disappoint them, it must be a terrible kind of opposition indeed that can prevent them from accomplishing the first part of their design; and if they land, who shall prophesy the scenes that are to follow? But whether they come or not, things continuing to proceed in their present train, must end, at no remote period, in convulsion, probably revolution. It seems to me the duty of each young man especially, seriously to think and make up his mind as to what he ought to do in the approach and the reality of such an event. . . . .

---

#### XXIII. TO HIS PARENTS.

*Chichester, July 13, 1798.*

HONORED PARENTS,—I wish I could compensate for so long a silence by communicating something that should give you great satisfaction; or at least something that should be new. A want of this, mixing itself with my antipathy to writing letters, and my disposition to procrastinate, is always a principal cause of my neglect in this particular—a neglect which I feel quite certain it would be unjust to ascribe to a want of affection or friendship, though indeed I cannot deny that it may have that

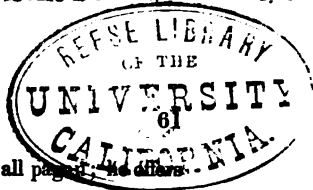
appearance. I have sometimes thought I would write to no one till I could tell something extraordinary. I think I will therefore tell nothing about my mind till I can announce a completed revolution there ; till every unworthy habit be melted away, and every conscientious principle in powerful operation. It would be useless to detail the catalogue of defects, and quite unnecessary to enumerate intended reforms. The revolutions of the world often admonish me that the mind of a reflective man ought, in respect of changes, to be beforehand with the world,—to have first achieved each important reform within itself, and to be able to say to other men, "*Follow me.*"

The events of this neighborhood are but quite of the common kind. Alternate alarms of the coming of the French, and ridicule of those alarms when past ; the parade of soldiers, and arms, and drums, and loyalty, and fashion, contrasted with complaints of declining trade, an enormous pressure of taxes, the wan and hopeless looks of poverty, execration of the government and governors, and sighs for a revolution.

I forget the precise time of hay-harvest in the North ; here it has been over some weeks, and had a fine dry season. The corn fields are becoming yellowish. There is a large quantity of the smaller kinds of fruit, such as gooseberries, cherries, &c. ; no considerable allowance, however, has fallen to my share.

The congregation here remains almost at a stand. Another member of the society, an aged woman, died about the time that I wrote my last letter. A whole view of the circumstances of the place strikes with an influence of the most bleak and chilly kind, on a mind in itself too cold, and which needs the directly opposite extreme of stimulation and fire. Yet in whatever manner I feel, my public addresses are not, I think, particularly defective, in point of animation. Vastly remote from methodistic violence, I yet think I cannot be charged with dulness. As to being in any great or considerable degree useful, it is a thing quite out of the question : I never conceive any such hope.

In this town the persons that concern themselves *any* way about religion, seem to me to fall into two classes ;—one who regard only a farce of forms and ceremonies, and what are called decorums. These are devout worshippers of gowns and bands, and the whole ecclesiastical mummary, and think it a most profane thing to appear in a pulpit in any other color than hallowed black. . . . And another class who have zealously adopted a few peculiar phrases and notions ; some of them proper, some cant, some unintelligible, and some absurd. They only want to have these repeated with heat and positiveness an indefinite number of times, with occasional damnatory clauses for the edification of such as happen to think otherwise, and they are satisfied. If a man has discarded, or perhaps never learnt, the accustomed theological diction, and speaks in the general language of good sense, as he would on any other subject, they do not like his sentiments, even though accordant



#### LETTERS.

with their own ;—his language and his thoughts are all paid, he offers sacrifice with strange fire.

I sometimes fall into profound musings on the state of this great world, on the nature and the destinies of man, on the subject of the question "What is truth?" The whole hemisphere of contemplation appears inexpressibly strange and mysterious. It is cloud pursuing cloud, forest after forest, and Alps upon Alps! It is in vain to declaim against scepticism. I feel with an emphasis of conviction, and wonder, and regret, that almost all things are enveloped in shade, that many things are covered with thickest darkness, that the number of things to which certainty belongs is small. . . . I hope to enjoy "the sunshine of the other world." One of the very few things that appear to me not doubtful, is the truth of Christianity in general; some of the evidences of which I have lately seen most ably stated by Archdeacon Paley in his book on the subject.

I should be perfectly in health but for some kind of complaint in my eyes, which gives me some apprehension. I have felt something of it ever since last summer or autumn, when it was caused by walking late in the evening, in the damp air of a shady retreat. . . . I very often bathe and swim in an inlet of the sea, which comes up within two miles of the town. I have persevered in learning to swim, and should now be but little afraid of the pits and rivers in your neighborhood. . . . I did not suppose that my father's remarks and sentiments required a distinct and formal reply. I am always convinced of the sincere benevolence that dictates them, always feel that they have a claim to attention and to gratitude, and am always happy to adopt them as my own, when my judgment perceives their justice.

---

#### XXIV. TO HIS PARENTS.

*Chichester, Nov. 19, 1798.*

HONORED PARENTS,—I am not insensible of the value of that kind attention of Providence which still prevents me from having to communicate to you, and from hearing from you, any disastrous intelligence. I can indeed almost wonder, when I consider what a thing is life, that I retain it thus through lengthened months and years, and when I consider how still more frail is health, that I have to tell you I still possess its utmost vigor, excepting only in the case of my eyes. . . .

What may be the general state of religious societies in England, I am utterly ignorant. Not a particle of that kind of intelligence seems to circulate down to this coast. I have no hope of any extensive prevalence of true religion without the interference of angelic or some other extraordinary and yet unknown agency to direct its energies, and conquer the vast combination of obstruction and hostility that opposes it.

An amazing fact is, that this hostility has hitherto been mainly successful. The triumphs of religion have been most limited and small, those of evil almost infinite. We see the melancholy result of an experiment of eighteen hundred years, the whole Christian era. This result compels me to conclude that religion is utterly incompetent to reform the world, till it is armed with some new and most mighty powers; till it appears in a *new and last dispensation*. Men are the same they always were; and, therefore, till some such wonderful event take place, their affections *will* be commanded by sense in opposition to faith, by earth in preference to heaven. The same causes operating, it were absurd to expect different effects. My melancholy musings on the state of the world have been much consoled by the famous maxim, "Whatever is, is right." Yes, I believe that the whole system taken together is the best possible—is absolutely good: and that all the evil that ever has taken place, or that now prevails, was strictly necessary to that ultimate good which the Father of all intends. Believing that He has in view an *end* infinitely and perfectly good, I must believe that all things which take place among his creatures are means, proceeding in an undeviating line towards that end, and that, in decreeing the end, he decreed also the means. As nothing can take place beyond the sphere of his power, nothing can take place against his will; therefore the evils, the wickedness of mankind, are not against his sovereign will. Nothing is contingent; all evils are foreseen by him, and he permits them; but he would not permit them if something else would better answer his final purposes, inasmuch as he chooses the best possible means to accomplish his end; to suppose otherwise would be to suppose that the great work might have been done better. He, from the beginning, chose that all things should come to pass as they have done, as they do, and as they will hereafter; otherwise something must have come to pass either without his knowledge or against his will. All the events of the world, all the actions of mankind, have been a correct chain of causes and consequences, up to the *first causes*; these *first causes* were all formed and fixed by God, with a perfect foresight of all the consequences, and he formed and fixed these causes in order to produce these very consequences. If sin be traced up to its cause, that cause will be found to have been—the *nature and the state of man*; but this cause was precisely so fixed by the Creator, and evidently with a determination that this fatal consequence should follow; for he fixed it *so* that he saw this consequence most certainly would follow. He who fixed the first great moving causes appointed all their effects to the end of the world. "Whatever is, is right." Thus, regarding God as strictly the cause of all things, I am led to consider all things as working his high will; and to believe that there is neither more nor less evil in the world than he saw accurately necessary toward that ultimate happiness to which he is training, in various manners, all his creatures. In this view, too, I can sometimes commit myself to his hands with great complacency, certain

that he will do for me, in all respects, that which is the best. . . . The season, so gloomy here, must be dismal up on your hills; it would be peculiarly so to my father, if the spirit and the hopes of religion were not independent of changing times, and capable of triumphing over them all.

---

## XXV. TO THE REV. JOSEPH HUGHES.

*Chichester, Feb. 15, 1799.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,—Forgive me that the business of this letter is, like that of so many former ones, entirely personal, and the person—myself. I am anxious to show you that your remonstrances, accusations, regrets, are not all in vain, though even during my last visit you thought them so. Unfortunately the most cynical fold of my character is the *outermost*. But impressions may disappear on the surface because they are gone inward.

I have thought with great emotion on some of the views and facts presented to me while with you. I have before expressed my conviction of the value of preaching as an instrument of the best kind of utility. How much must the *sentimental* force of this conviction have been augmented by the representation of the apostolic felicities of such a man as Pearce! I feel affectingly that this is to live divinely; that this is indeed to imitate the great Master, and to pursue a course which his approbation will crown. How much I long to call such men brothers, and to attest the relationship by a similarity of spirit and of action!

I have asked myself with solemn earnestness, and deep regret, "Why am not I added to the evangelic constellation?" Oh! why not myself an apostle—a confessor? Shall I be indeed estranged from the best cause? At the day of accounts, shall it indeed be found that I have been in the Messiah's kingdom, less than all my contemporaries? Am not I to hear the "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord?" I have asked myself, "Are the obstacles insuperable? are the causes of failure *necessarily* perpetual?" I am not convinced that the answer ought to be affirmative. I love the evangelic style of truth when I read it, or hear it, more than any other;—it appeals directly to my heart, and makes me aspire ardently to attain that divine discipleship, that devotion to Jesus, which would make me zealous, and useful, and happy. I am unwilling to believe myself finally precluded from the most favored and popular field of religious exertion,—that in which such men as Pearce, Hinton, and yourself are laboring. You intimated in your last letter that this career is still open to me, let but my mind be adapted. You repeated the opinion during my visit. I wish to know how far you were sincere. I should be happy to make one more experiment among people, if they are to be found, who have all the

warmth of the gospel. There is a feeling that tells me I should succeed. Do you deem my present views of Christianity, if aided by more fervor of inculcation, essentially inadequate? My opinions are in substance Calvinistic, and therefore, when fully brought out, differ obnoxiously from those of the General Baptists here or elsewhere. Add to this, that many of their societies, either through the medium of their opinions, or from some other cause, seem to have been smitten with a mortal coldness, and incurable decay. Among them therefore I could never reach the animated freedom, if I could obtain even a bare toleration, of that strain of preaching which my views require, and of which some enviable examples evince the superior efficacy, and in this efficacy evince perhaps the peculiar approbation of God.

Now then the question is, Will you recommend me to any society you may hear of in your connexion, or to any other man (Pearce for instance) whose local information may be more extensive? I have an irresistible conviction that "the truth as it is in Jesus," is incomparably the best thing that can be administered to my fellow-mortals, and that he is the noblest of men who administers this with the most fidelity and zeal. I feel this moment as if an angel appeared to me and commanded me thus to employ myself to my last hour. Yes, I will! The idea of losing all that glory of Christian achievement and immortal reward, which still appears *as if it were possible to me*, would greatly aggravate the sadness with which I think how much I have already lost.

I repeat that while I cannot but condemn the circle and the spell of any denomination, *as a party of systematics professing a monopoly of truth*, I hold (I believe) accurately the leading points of the Calvinistic faith; as the corruption of human nature, the necessity of a divine power to change it, irresistible grace, the influence of the Spirit, the doctrine of the atonement in its most extensive and emphatic sense, final perseverance, &c., &c. As to my opinion respecting the person of Christ, a candid and honest statement would be, that I deem it the wisest rule to use *precisely the language of Scripture*, without charging myself with a definite, a sort of mathematical hypothesis, and the interminable perplexities of explication and inference. I am probably in the same parallel of latitude with respect to orthodoxy, as the revered Dr. Watts in the late maturity of his thoughts. I assigned to you the reason why I consider the question not of primary importance; nor in fact is any question so, which is of difficult comprehension and determination.

The necessarian scheme, which has greatly consoled some of my feelings regarding mankind, has not, however, diminished my regrets for my own past negligence, nor the ever springing desire to tread the exalted path of Christian heroism,—of prophets and apostles; and by teaching the strict connection between cause and effect, it has enforced my conviction of the necessity of means and strenuous exertion to the attainment of ends. . . .

XXVI. TO THE REV. JOSEPH HUGHES.

[Date uncertain.]

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I have nothing additional or different to express on the theological subject of our correspondence. Every new reflection tells me that my evangelic determinations ought to be, and every hope flatters that they will be, irreversible. Assembling into one view all things in the world that are important, and should be dear to mankind, I distinguish the Christian cause as the celestial *soul* of the assemblage, evincing the same pre-eminence, and challenging the same emphatic passion, which in any other case *mind* does beyond the inferior elements; and I have no wish of equal energy with that which aspires to the most intimate possible connection with Him who is the life of this cause, and the life of the world.

I believe I expressed myself in a very crude manner on the subject of elocution, in my last letter. I must have utterly misrepresented myself if you suppose my sentiments go in the smallest degree to approve a dry, monotonous enunciation. My leading principle is the simple and trite one, that every kind of speaking, whether argumentation, invective, familiar ideas, or solemn ones, should in public always take that modulation of voice and cast of manner, which in the actual intercourse of life is ascertained to be the appropriate one; and that there ought to be no *canonical* manner, belonging by distinction to the pulpit. It is of course that the sentimental *intonation* of voice should not be assumed, but when, and in the degree in which, the *sentiment* is there. Perhaps it is fair that a speaker's manner should thus always indicate the present pitch of his mind. In my diction I am sensible that a striking defect must have appeared in most of the extemporaneous specimens you have heard. You would notice a great many inert, make-weight pieces of expression, to supply the want of continuity; many spiritless terminations of a sentence, hanging to the period like a withered hand to the body; a deficiency of the life-blood, so to call it, of fervid intelligence, circulating vitality to the last extremities of expression, into the minutest ramifications of phrase; a certain something like restive unwillingness in the train of words to move on, producing an effect rather like the creak of uncoiled wheels; and a want of what I again name the liquid flux of expression, varying, swelling, concealing each rugged point as it glides freely over, and passing gracefully away.

I repeat that these defects belong to my *uninspired* seasons; that they are not inserted into my most appropriate and characteristic diction, even my letters will testify. I own it, however, a criminal neglect, not to have acquired that command of my mind which would make it independent on the visitations of sentiment, for an execution at least moderately proper and graceful. . . .



## XXVII. TO HIS PARENTS.

*Chichester, March 25, 1799.*

HONORED PARENTS,—Some of the particulars contained in your letter occasioned me considerable surprise. At an advanced age, changes of any kind are unpleasant, and a new habitation may at first require one degree of patience added to that which your situation needed before. However, the principal consideration in any residence is that piety which is confined to none, and which makes into a temple of the divinity whatever house it inhabits. To the immortal spirit every house, and the world itself, is but a prison; you carry into your new abode the pleasing certainty, that *no* sublunary abode will detain you so long as the one which you have quitted. How much you will know before so many more years shall have passed! Long before that time you will have seen the visions of eternity; you will have entered the *alone* happy mansions; you will have joined the great company which no man can number. Yes, and at an earlier period or a later I hope I shall meet you there, after having overcome through the blood of the Lamb. Go before, if it must be so, and enter first into the paradise of God; I trust that the path of faith and zeal will conduct me to the same happy place, and that He who has the keys of the invisible world will give me admittance there.

. . . . Provided I could realize the requisite preliminaries, a matrimonial connexion is certainly the object of my wishes at present, as much as, perhaps more than, at any former time. Certain romantic projects, stretching into wild and distant scenes, have, for some time past, considerably faded on my imagination. I wish it were possible to mingle enthusiasm of design with sobriety of calculation, and then to crown this conjunction with the addition of resolute, persevering industry.

Within the last fortnight my eyes have been in *one* respect (for two or three complaints seem to meet in them) considerably better. I do not feel reason to be sanguine as to the effect of the means last prescribed to me, but shall persist for the present to employ them, though attended with much pain. To-morrow I mean to write a statement of symptoms, in a letter to Hughes, to be shown to the gentleman I last consulted, and to whom I was introduced through the means of Hughes's acquaintance with him. If it appear necessary, I will not hesitate to make another journey to London on purpose. I can at present read a moderate time with tolerable ease, which I could by no means do some time since. Conscience has repeatedly made accusation on my neglect of employing this faculty, each faculty, the whole man, in a zealous prosecution of the noblest purposes. Hoping for a restoration of soundness in this valuable article, and determined to consecrate my whole self, whether in disorder or well, to the work of God, with even an apostle's zeal, I feel much resignation to his providence, respecting the event of this and each other affair. Your prayers I know will not be wanting. In mine I have felt and ac-

knowledgeed the necessity of admonitory dispensations, and even have been in some degree thankful for them. I have supplicated heaven, that whatever afflictions are absolutely needful to make me and keep me such as I ought to be, and such as I find it very difficult to be, may be applied. At whatever cost, I fervently wish to be humble, to be devotional, to be heavenly-minded, in short, to be a Christian. Life is but short; and it is long, long since I fancied it *could* be a scene of pleasure and paradise. I consent to take it as a series of sorrows; to pass through it as a vale of tears, if in the end that better world may pour all its light and its joys on my soul.

My visit to Mr. Hughes has been of great service in respect of my religious feelings. He has the utmost degree of evangelic animation, and has incessantly, with affectionate earnestness in his letters, and still more in his personal intercourse, acted the monitor on this subject. It has not been in vain. I have felt the commanding force of the duty to examine and to judge myself with a solemn faithfulness. In some measure I have done so, and I see that on this great subject I have been wrong. The views which my judgment has admitted in respect to the gospel in general, and Jesus the great pre-eminent object in it, have not inspired my affections in that animated, unbounded degree, which would give the energy of enjoyment to my personal religion, and apostolic zeal to my ministrations among mankind. This fact is serious, and moves my deep regrets. The time is come to take on me, with stricter bonds and more affectionate warmth, the divine discipleship. I fervently invoke the influences of Heaven, that the whole spirit of the gospel may take possession of all my soul, and give a new and powerful impulse to my practical exertions in the cause of the Messiah.

My opinions are more Calvinistic than when I first came here; so much so as to be in direct hostility with the leading principles of belief in this society. The greatest part of my views are, I believe, accurately Calvinistic. My opinion respecting future punishments is an exception.

Judging from what is here, I deem that the season must with you be still very inclement. Very soon, however, another May will shed its mild influences to alleviate my father's pains and confinement. My mother will feel even so short a remove an added burden in the fatigue of a return from Hebden-bridge, Heptonstall, &c. Which house is it in the fold that you occupy? Nothing of consequence is in motion here, except indeed the arrangements respecting the income tax, which seem to transform many into enemies of government who professed to be friends before. What is the state, on the whole, of the cotton trade? No trade, however, no resources of any kind, can long support the present enormous system—as about a third part of the whole productive industry of the nation goes directly to the purposes of government and war, with the prospect of a still larger proportion being so diverted each succeeding year.

The fate of Europe, it seems, is about to be put to a last trial in Ger-

many. If the French are still successful, universal revolution, England not excepted, seems a matter of course. One of my last sermons was on the text, "The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice." His kingdom come, his will be done. . . .

---

XXVIII. TO AN UNKNOWN LADY.

*Chichester* [date uncertain].

Miss C.—It is an ingenuous spirit which approaches you—happy to avow an animated esteem for your qualities, and very sorry for the destiny which renders you a stranger.

The accidental mention of some of your relatives, during an evening I lately passed with a highly intelligent and respected gentleman, led the conversation at last to you. I had not heard of you before. Your friend (qualified by uncommon discernment and coolness to represent justly) displayed a character which captivated my attention entirely, for I instantly perceived that no common spirit gleamed in its expressive lines. He described your quickness and vigor of thought, the cordial ardor of your sentiments, and your resolute perseverance to obtain whatever accomplishments you determined ought to be yours. He spoke of a vivacity significant and characteristic, even in that very sprightly extreme into which he intimated it sometimes plays. He added the best praise, apparently with a confidence it would be merited for ever; he said you were *good*. He evidently described with great pleasure, and has selected a most fortunate subject to impart it. I acknowledged the claims of the interesting stranger with an emotion that exulted in an occasion of expressing itself so warmly. We could have wished not to feel that the instance we contemplated was a rare one. We were sorry to glance a look of mingled pity and blame on the common currency of female character; and contrast was not necessary to Miss C., the multitude soon faded from sight, and left her alone. We wanted but your actual presence to have been completely happy that hour. We joined in regret that the world should have influences inauspicious to a person of such happy promise; that to live in its gayer scenes especially, and lose none of the refinements of sensibility and conscience, is a trial of excellence which gives benevolence a solicitude even for Miss C.

A little while after this conversation the thought occurred of writing to you. But would not this be a strange action? would not some fantastic animal of the family of Don Quixote appear to Miss C.'s imagination? Yet why? she will not deny my right to be interested in a character like hers, wherever it is found, and to associate her image with those ideal forms of select individuals among whom I love to muse. Will not the admiration which I cannot refuse to rising excellence, though distant and personally unknown, entitle me to convey the ex-

pression of a wish, that escaping all eclipse, that excellence may be finished into full and permanent lustre? Yes! I *have* a right to the pleasure of thinking of Miss C., of wishing she may be greatly happy, and of telling her so, though in this form of friendship without a name.

The view of such an animated and strong character naturally leads to reflections on what are intimately allied to it—high principles and conduct.

If I should venture freely on to express some of these reflections to the persons at whose idea they rise, will she absolve me? will candor still wear her accustomed smile? I hesitate; but I could not hesitate if I thought you would in any degree charge me with impertinence. A high opinion of your character alone could have suggested the thought of addressing any such communications to you. An essential principle in a superior character is a refined self-respect, and I could not bear for a moment to hurt this delicate and honorable feeling. Formal lecture-looking presumption would not more incur than deserve your scorn. Believe me, Madam, no mortal can detest more than I do, the part of an officious intruder with a world of pretended wisdom to spare. I abhor it. With so much intelligence and principle, you will of yourself be just to each subject of deep interest; but this is the very reason that tempts me to offer reflections on some of those subjects to you. I know the luxury of disclosing ideas to a mind who has ideas, of expatiating on some grand interest with a person who feels already all its inspiration. It is like planting a favorite flower amid a bed of still more beautiful flowers, instead of dooming it to droop or die among nettles, a fate very similar to that of aspiring sentiments when attempted to be imparted to trivial or degraded minds. I acknowledge ambition, Madam—the wish to obtain for some of my sentiments the honor of mingling with yours. I wish to enjoy the complacency of believing that for a little while a very interesting lady has thought with me, and perhaps has not been displeased. I felicitate you on possessing a mind of a superior order; what paltry, vulgar dust to this are those distinctions which the world holds out for its fools to adore—and they do adore! Pagans!

Allow me to second your own views in the wish, that you may secure its utmost value, disclose all its energies, embrace all its felicities, strengthen it to the last possible degree of power. Let the mind assert an existence entire, active, and strong, a contrast to so many minds which we see glimmering and flitting on the brink of nothing. Let it command through the whole system of feeling and action with an ever-waking and mighty prevalence; so that life may be to the utmost that is possible, what it is a poor thing when it is not, the life of mind. Be the superior person, the dignified Caroline. You feel you can, therefore should, nay, *will* be. In the scene of mental pleasures and attainments, you will have the same advantages as a person of gigantic stature in a grove of fruit-trees—an ability to reach the highest and the best; and here ability, right and duty, are the same. Nature, science,

morals, religion, these belong to you. You have power to enter and possess these treasures; and if it were possible you would voluntarily shut yourself out, who would applaud the self-denial? who but those whose applause and censure you would despise? How slight to a vigorous mind, how insipid to hearts of sensibility, is the usual tenor of pursuits and intercourse among many of our acquaintance, among the younger part especially—among the ladies (I think I do not see Miss C. frown)—among the *ladies* emphatically. I appeal to you whether insignificance, frivolity, inanity, be not the word? Is this the triumph of existence, the glory of being rational, the superiority of man over a butterfly? I am not pleading for brown solemnity, the November habits of fourscore and a convent. No! No! No! I am pleading for the genuine voluptuousness of life. I am pleading that life may have some zest and poignancy infused by a mind acting with vivacity on subjects worthy of its energy. I am pleading that life may not be dissipated among trifles, till at last itself sicken into a tasteless trifle, with neither resources to be happy, nor courage to expire! You, madam, were not designed for the common level, nor, I think, could often condescend to it, and be blameless; but that level cannot be yours. “A soul pregnant with celestial fire” will disdain that little artificial sphere within which imbecility and folly have condemned themselves, and may invite *you*, to move. It will scorn to inhabit a painted egg-shell, and live on what commonly passes for pleasure. It feels attractions irresistible, the magnetism of the sky. It will demand its own element. Let it rise!

The divinest object is to be *good*. Pardon me, madam, I do not forget the pleasing fact that you are good; only I am wishing that you may be signally so. In goodness, any elevation below the sublimest gratifies a noble spirit, not as a complacent resting-place, but as an approach towards the summit, and an omen of reaching it ere-while. A more than sufficient number will be content to inhabit the low ground of virtue, and Miss C. can well be spared to try the ascent to those elevated possibilities which she cannot have beheld with indifference. I trust your contempt is not less than mine, of the common notions, cant, and conduct, of contented mediocrity. How much nobler is the generous distress which, after weeping over conscious deficiency, kindles into enthusiasm at the fair vision of perfect goodness, gilding a far-off view of future destiny! With that emotion we contemplate a great example, and eagerly adopt a brother or sister of the heart from the regions of death or poetry! But who shall convert the humble pleasure of admiring into the triumph of being such a character? To a question like this, Miss C.’s feelings have often responded.

There is one solemn rule of endless obligation, without pledging ourselves to which we are not numbered by the Eternal among his own great party of friends, selected through the creation; viz. to accomplish both as to what we are, and what we do, *all*, absolutely, *all the good we can*; *can*, that is to say, by the combination of all our time, all our facul-

ties, and all the assistance which a gracious power above will impart. If, therefore, at any pitch of attainment or exertion we pause to ask, "Is not this enough?" and again, "Will not this suffice?" the answer is instant and invariable, "Can you do no more? Are you improving your time with a diligence which cannot, *cannot* be more intense? Are you cultivating your heart and mind with a solicitude of wisdom not to be augmented? Are you serving mankind with a Saviour's benevolence, and God with a martyr's zeal?" Answer, O conscience! thou canst tell! Rigid but sublime condition! yet not rigid either, for goodness is not a task of superstition, and foreign to the great affair of happiness. To be good is to be happy. Angels are happier than mankind because they are better.

"What a glorious world!" I exclaim, as I look up to the alternate clear effulgence and cloudy beauties of the sky, and then over all the vernal charms of the earth. How genuine, how innocent, are all these delightful visions! "Peace be to thee, candid nature, and thy scenes! Thou art what thou appearest." But this indeceptive disclosure of the reality of things does not prevail among the objects of human pursuit; for see the numbers who in quest of happiness are fatally deluded—deluded surely, for they could never choose to be so miserable.

It is unfortunate, in such a scene, to dare the experiment without the keen and watchful fire of an angel's eye. Decree in the outset, dear madam, that you *will not* be imposed upon. As the fair forms that promise happiness and joy approach you and invite your attention with smiles, arrest them and compel them within the circle where truth combats enchantment. How many will you send deformed away! Be resolute! Pluck away every mask and veil! Look at them with the mind's full force; examine them sternly, as Rhadamanthus judging the departed spirits. Exert this keen inquisition on everything—your habits, your friends, your engagements, and whatever is important to you. Repeat, that you will not be imposed on; ascertain the fact, grasp the reality. Ask, "What good? what tendency? what price? what duration?" Ask, and pause. Determine to extort the reply of truth. Oh, do not relent! a judge or a captive! The hour of trial must precede the hour of felicity. Remember that each delusive appearance may conceal a fountain of some deadly element, which the unfortunate person that examines not but confides, may soon perceive to open, and pour a Stygian stream over the whole of life. Remember that each delusion must ultimately fly; how happy then, to anticipate the hour of revelation, and leave as little as possible to be taught by grim experience, with her execrable lesson in *black print*! Thus, while so many are doomed to wake from the dreams of vanishing delight, may you possess "the sober certainty of waking bliss;" and may your felicities, as they bloom and aspire, embrace the column of eternity, and live for ever! Instruction, with its detail of cautions, is not for you. A friendly voice will not say to you, "Avoid this and the other; do not condescend to the

petty clicking of cards ; do not waste your time, and the dear, delightful luxuries of a sentimental breast, in those modish groups of company where Miss C. or where Minerva would appear, and act with no superiority over a pretty fool." No ; you will sit in judgment yourself, and act from a decision all your own. You are able, you are worthy ; do not forget a judge's deliberation.

The friends of virtue are pledged by that friendship to an incessant hostility against folly in all its forms. You have determined, therefore, what kind of regard may be due to some of the caprices of fashion, and to all its slaves ; to mere *beaux* and *belles* ; to the vain pomp of wealth and rank, parading to the vulgar gaze, in the laughable notion that to *look big* is to *be great* ; to what may be called the *cant* of gentility, mincing, in affected phrases, through all its varieties of insignificance ; and to the tribe of occupations and insect amusement (alas ! flies about a dead body !) which engage so many of the circles of what is called "polished society." Smite some of these forms of folly with an ardent beam of your mind, and they will fade before you like Hamlet's ghost at the crowing of the cock.

Against all these virtue expresses unalterable antipathy, and shall her accomplished votary, her Caroline, do less ? Folly meanwhile may wonder why you should not graciously smile. It belongs to a virtuous spirit to assert an independence of character, a power of self-direction, and to scorn and violate custom, and everything else that opposes its sublime principles. Despicable is an atom character, carried along with the mass,—a human bubble, impotent to move an inch against the stream. You are a person not to be led, but to lead ; your mental vigor will frequently give you an ascendancy among those you may associate with, and benevolence will point it to its noblest use ; can you imagine to yourself a pleasure more emphatic than to enlighten and meliorate ? Reflect on the serious discipline and momentous value of life ; reflect that life itself will come to an end. These thoughts will take away much from gaiety ; these deductions ought to be made. The claims are such as we are not likely to refuse ; what remains will be legitimate.

I know how ungracious an offering such a letter as this would be to many young ladies ; some would call it impertinent ; some fantastic, and very many insufferably serious. "The ghost of Cato !" they would exclaim, and recoil. In saying this I am not assuming that you must of course necessarily approve ; yet I have addressed these ideas to you in the persuasion that they would not be unwelcome, though they could not be necessary. If they were necessary, I know they would not be acceptable. "And if not necessary," perhaps you will say, "why, after all, do you write ?" Can you not then, madam, be kind to the ambition I mentioned before ?

While I indulge with pleasure and pride the thought of revolving sentiments *with* Miss C. rather than *for* her, another thought tells me that it is not exactly thus that her sentiments would have flowed, and

not exactly thus she would have communicated them to a person for whom she meant to express her high complacency and respect. She would have infused a certain engaging spirit through all that would have charmed away the possibility of offence, and made an intrusion ever dear to memory.

Well, madam, but do accept the intentions of this strange letter, from a person who wonders that a sympathetic interest in excellence, though unseen, *should* be strange.\*

---

XXIX. TO THE REV. JOSEPH HUGHES.

*Chichester, April 29, 1799.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,—Some days spent from home have combined with other circumstances to delay what ought to have been an immediate answer to your last. My acknowledgments are due for the service rendered me in waiting on Mr. Wathen, and transmitting his advice. It will be followed,—not indeed without a strong suspicion that there is some disorder in the globe of the eye, to which this treatment alone will not reach. I now see, or fancy, a slight amendment in the lids. For the greater part of the time since I wrote, the eyes altogether have been in a state somewhat more favorable in respect of feeling, than I then described. That any progress has been made towards removing the principal cause of disorder, whatever it may be, I can scarcely allow myself to hope. My wishes join with yours, that this and every other painful visitation may have a purifying effect.

Lately I have felt a degree of gratitude which I had before scarcely believed possible, for the discipline of suffering, while a merciful hand applies it to correct the mind.

I proceed to the substance of your letter. I shall not conceal that the *first* impression was much of the painful kind. I said to myself, walking pensively in a field, “*Here*, while I speak of the miseries of human guilt and impotence, assert the inanity of human merits, and the presumptuous impiety of reposing in any degree on *self*—while I refer everything to divine grace, assert the infinite value of the Saviour, say that he is ‘all in all,’ exhibit him as the blessed and only hope of the world—I encounter a cold and discordant sympathy among the principal persons of the connexion. I am called Calvinistic, Methodistic, and cast out of the synagogue. I address myself to minds of happier light, whose intelligence I admire, whose piety I love, and *they* see nothing in the emotions which have prompted my sighs, my prayers, my ardent hopes, more than the illusions of imagination, but thinly and partially concealing an ‘*enmity against God*,’ which still lies black and immove-

\* “The consumptive complaint of which this young lady died, at the age of twenty-one, has in two or three years carried off her mother and six sisters.”—*Note by Mr. Foster.*



able at the foundation of all! 'Tis thus I am for ever repelled from every point of religious confraternity, and doomed, still doomed, a melancholy monad, a weeping solitaire. Oh world! how from thy *every* quarter blows a gale, wintry, cold, and bleak, to the heart that would expand!"

These were the feelings of the instant; but I soon recovered calmness enough to recognize the faithful friend in the sharp inquisitor, and to thank him both for his benevolence and for the *mode* of evincing it. Had he discovered less penetration or less faithfulness, I should have respected him less. I am constrained to feel you are worthy to be my Preceptor still; and, while I hope to *extract some* good from every one, I trust to receive it in copious communications from you.

Perhaps it may be salutary for myself to entertain some of the same apprehensions which you have expressed, and certainly a severe investigation of the state of my mind discloses so much that is unworthy, or equivocal, as to warrant suspicion to extend still further than I see.

I know it too well, that for a long course of time, during which I have felt an awful regard for religion, my mind has not been under the full, immediate impression of its most interesting character, the most gracious of its influences, its evangelic beams. I have not with "open face beheld the transforming glory of the Lord." I have, as it were, worshipped in the outer courts of the temple, and not habitually dwelt in that sacred recess where the God of love reveals all himself, in Jesus Christ. And is it difficult to conceive, that in aspiring and advancing towards a better state, I may be accompanied for a while by some measure of the defects and the shades contracted in that gloomy sojourn, which I must for ever deplore?

It is much to affirm, and I think I may with great confidence affirm, that all my cherished, warmest desires and intentions are consonant to the pure evangelic standard. May I not allege it as some proof of this, that I at present wish to commit myself to the full extent of the apostolic profession; nay, more, that I do habitually commit myself here, at the expense of the feelings which regard the coincidence or opposition of those I am connected with?

You doubt whether my heart has really given the fulness of its affection to the Saviour. As far as my heart itself feels this doubt, it is filled with trembling; it assuredly can never rest till no doubt on the subject remains.

But which of the *principles* of that devotion are wanting? Certainly none of the solemn *reasons* of it are wanting, and none, I think, *unfelt*. Whatever is appalling in the aspect of the king of terrors, whatever is affecting in the welfare and prospects of a soul guilty, immortal, and *my own*; all that is interesting in the pursuit of happiness, that is commanding in the opening visions of Eternity, or awful in the contemplation of God the Judge,—all these concur with the infinite worthiness of that

Saviour, to constrain me into the sacred union, and to seal it. Can a more urgent and immense interest, can stronger bonds, make him the Lord of my heart or of yours? Are these not precisely the reasons why he *should* be dear? Yes, he stands forward to my view in a most momentous connexion with all these; and in whatever degree these mighty objects are affecting to me, in that degree he is become estimable and beloved.

But you fear I do not fully meet the most important office and character of the Saviour, that of a deliverer from the miseries of sin; that I do not receive Jesus in the deep abasement of conscious guilt. Perhaps you imagine me approaching him in the spirit of one who should say, "I have sat in judgment on thy claims, and I find that *thou art worthy that I should be thy friend*; I choose, therefore, to wear the *honors* of thy cause, and rank among thy *dignified* followers." Indeed you are mistaken. It is at the audit of conscience, while guilt weighs heavy on my heart, that I learn the true and unspeakable value of a Redeemer. But I have ever felt this internal world of iniquity, and the endless griefs that accompany it, a mournful theme. Surely I might have been excused, though I did not disclose in detail all the sentiments that excruciate or melt a soul, contemplating and lamenting its deep depravity and aggravated guilt. I might have been forgiven a reluctance to expatiate on the subject *as personal to myself*, before any being but Him only who can pardon. Is it not enough that I am awfully sensible how presumptuous and hopeless this advance to *Him* would be, without a frequent reference to the work of Jesus Christ?

Why would my friend attribute the *confidence* with which I have expressed my intentions and expectations to a vain self-sufficiency, when it could be assigned to a much more generous cause, *the force of resistless conviction*? It is impossible to feel what I sometimes feel, and not indulge at the time (inconsiderately, it may be) a persuasion, that the effect of such emotions *must* be eternal. "My heart presumes it cannot lose, The relish all my days." I scarcely ever read the New Testament without feeling all that I now describe; and I love to cherish this ardor. Indeed this enthusiasm often subsides into the recollection of *past* ardors, convictions, confidence, hopes, and *their fate*! I then wonder I can ever indulge confidence again. But again it swells and rises—and should it not rise?—at the view of that gracious economy of divine influences and strength from heaven which Jesus has proclaimed and still administers. I am verily persuaded that no man embraces this part of the Gospel with a firmer belief or a warmer joy than I do. I solemnly aver that all my habitual confidence, as to what I shall become or accomplish, rests exclusively here. The alternative is *such* a hope, or flat despair.

"Mortifications, censures, injustice, failures, await the Christian zealot." Yes, it is impossible I can have observed the world so long, and not be apprised of it all. I perceive the thorns and briars tangled

across his path, and—to fill up the picture—the spiders that harbor among them—the causes of disgust added to the causes of pain. The most sanguine fires of zeal and benevolence should not, and cannot long delude his judgment out of the certain, sad, and permanent estimate of mankind. Human society, compounded as it is with ignorance, prejudice, and conceit, furnishes ungracious materials to work upon. It is but to a comparative few that the Christian missionary can hope to be useful. Melancthon soon had cause to “smile in bitterness” at his fond youthful expectations of convincing and reforming all mankind. There are many whom, as Dr. Young says, “you cannot love but for the Almighty’s sake.” Oh, what a humiliation of all that was aspiring, what a blast of all that was tender, have I sometimes experienced on making the transition from the exaltation of prayer, and the fervors of charity in the closet, to the *praxis*—in the actual sight and intercourse of mankind. A reflecting man’s expectations will indeed be moderate, and it will be difficult for him to combine with his zeal and efforts that enthusiasm which is forbidden to mingle its fire with his *hopes*. But what then? What happy energy has sustained and impelled Watts and Doddridge? What energy *does* fire Pearce, Hinton, or yourself? And cannot *I* be kept constant to the righteous cause by the voice of the Eternal? Cannot *I* feel the solemn claims of a duty that leaves me no choice? Cannot *I* consider Him who endured the contradiction of sinners against himself? Cannot *I* have respect to the recompense of reward? As to “disappointment in the expectation of applause,” as to “the sacrifice of philosophic fame,” if you will believe me, I hold these considerations very light. I have lately thought on this subject intensely, and not in vain. Philosophy itself unites with religion to pour an utter contempt on the passion for fame. I have been laboring a good while to fix my mind firmly on this principle—namely, to persist in what I judge the most excellent, resolutely, zealously, and unalterably, and *only for unalterable reasons*, and then regard neither praise nor censure, admiration nor contempt, caresses nor abuse, any otherwise than *as they may affect my power of doing good*.

There is great force in your remarks on the deceptions of *imagination*. A strong imagination, expanding and sweeping over ages and worlds in quest of grandeur, will exult in the sight of whatever is *great* in any department of contemplation, as well the evangelic as any other. *It will hail it as an object of taste*. It will revel in a sublime romance of religion. It will admire the character of Jesus, and some of the Christian truths and prospects, as magnificent objects, analogous to the heavenly bodies, and stupendous phenomena in the physical universe. These feelings may exist where they do not evince, nor form any part of the influences of, a divine spirit pervading the soul and making it evangelic and heavenly. This is what you mean; I believe it is too true. But what then is the *criterion* to ascertain the nature of these fervors in any given case? The proof will be found in the *consistency or incon-*

*sistency* of these feelings with the *other* movements of the mind, and in their consequences. Let Rousseau be the instance. In his eloquent praise of Christianity, *taken by itself*, you will hardly detect a proof that it is not dictated by a piety sublime as his genius. Ask then, Does Rousseau zealously endeavor to establish all the proofs of Christianity? Does Rousseau reverently submit his genius and his philosophic speculations to its authority? Does Rousseau receive with equal pleasure the *abasing*, as the elevating, truths of Christianity? Does he, as a *guilty* being, rejoice in Christ *chiefly as a Saviour*? Can he despise philosophic fame for the sake of Christ? Does he zealously proclaim him to his brethren? Is he sensible of the excellence of the Christian consolations? Does he pray fervently? Does he deny himself and take up his cross? Are his morals reformed? These would prove him a Christian, and his eloquence would be that of an apostle. 'Tis matter of never-ending regret that Rousseau's character will not bear such a process of trial. I am not claiming any kindred to his sublime genius while I bring myself to the touchstone, and say, "A glow of imagination;"—but certainly that is not all. The gospel is to me, not a matter of complacent speculation only, but of momentous use, of urgent necessity. I come to Jesus Christ because I need pardon, and purification, and strength. I feel more abased, as *he* appears more divine. In the dust I listen to his instructions and commands. I pray fervently in his name, and above all things for a happy union with him. I do, and will proclaim him. For his sake I am willing to go through evil report and good report. I wish to live and die in his service.

Is not this some resemblance of "the simplicity of the fishermen," on which you insist with emphasis? This spirit, my dear friend, is in a certain degree,—to be, I trust, divinely augmented,—assuredly mine. The Galilean faith has gained the ascendant, and I anticipate, though with humility and intervals of fear, everything happy from its influence. The tide of my mind is really turned, and though it has not yet mounted the desired height, I trust I cannot be mistaken as to its direction.

The hint in your letter respecting scripture *diction*, was, I remember, in your conversation, a direct accusation of my being philosophically reluctant or ashamed to employ it. No charge was ever more unjust. I acknowledge the defect, but the *reason* of it is a memory which I can never trust to attempt verbal citations from any book, unless either I have time for recollection, or have the passage written before me; nay, the reason is anything rather than the one you have surmised.

Thus far I have written, and with more prolixity than I intended; somewhat in character of *client* to my pen. But after all, my capital concern is, not to defend what I am, but to be what I ought to be. If some of the evils you have suggested *do* still adhere to me, my most ardent prayer is for their removal. Will not yours be added? Meanwhile both my feelings and a strong conviction of *duty* impel me towards action. The reflection on the inutility to which I have been doomed so

long, often starts into anguish. I cannot divest myself of the persuasion that I belong to some popular and useful sphere. Will my much respected friend assist me? Will not you take me by the hand? will you not meet with a brother's cordiality a returning wanderer? Can the gracious spirit of the Christian cause move its advocate rather to repel associates than invite? Methinks a disciple of Jesus would say, "He that is not *against* us, is *for* us." Methinks while he would animadvert with faithfulness on every defect, he yet would zealously urge forward the *general effect*. Methinks he would wish a convalescent religionist placed amid the most salubrious air. But I am checked,—I am chilled. Was not your letter meant to tell me that you would not incur any responsibility on the subject? This was one of my ideas in the first impression, and I am not now certain of the contrary. It is of pressing consequence that I should know. Of my engagement here, only one month remains. I cannot regret its termination;—it is a Cimmerian sojourn. Do not accuse me, my dear friend; do not require that I should work miracles. A most uncommon combination of circumstances renders it almost hopeless that any man can be of much service here. I have not written to any person but yourself on the subject of another situation. I ought to consider you as a favorable specimen of what I might expect in the evangelic connection; if you, therefore, refuse your countenance, it will be in vain to apply to any other. Then the sweet hopes of an useful happiness, which have revived with so much ardor, would have bloomed but again to die! Well; it would be but one more in the sable train of disappointments. My destiny is in the hands of a good, but mysterious Being. Let it be accomplished!

Affectionately yours,

J. FOSTER.

### XXX. TO AN UNKNOWN LADY.\*

About Midsummer, 1799.

I SHOULD not venture a momentary interruption of feelings which I know must choose the pensive retirement of the heart, if I did not hope to insinuate a sentiment or two, not discordant with the tone of grief.

I am willing to believe the interest I have taken in your happiness, will authorize me to convey to you, at such a serious hour, the expression of a friendly and solicitous sympathy. I am willing to believe, that the sincere respect with which I have addressed you in serener days,† will be a pledge to you, that, in assuming such a liberty, I cannot forget the delicacy of respect which peculiarly belongs to you, now you are in

\* "The person to whom this was addressed was, the writer believes, in health at the time this was written, but died a few months afterwards. She received it a few weeks after the death of one very near relative, and when another was each day expected to die."—*Note by Mr. Foster.*

† Letter XXVIII.

a scene of suffering; and that this little attention which I seem to myself to owe you, will not be deemed to violate the sacredness of sorrow.

I should be most happy, if it were possible for me to impart any influences that could alleviate the oppressions of the heart, or aid your fortitude in its severe probation. But I dare not indulge so pleasing a hope. I know too well that suffering clings to the sufferer's *self*; and that any other mind, though actuated by the kindest wishes, is still a foreign mind, and inhabits a separate sphere, from which it can but faintly breathe consoling sentiments.

Yet, doubtless, there are in existence truths of sweet and mighty inspiration, which, perfectly applied, would calm your feelings, and irradiate the gloom around you. How happy were the art to steal such fire from heaven! How much I wish it yours! Yes, and there are softenings of distress, glimpses of serenity, ideas of tender enthusiasm, firm principles, sublime aspirings, to mingle with the feelings of the good in every situation. I love to assure myself these are not wanting to you. I hope they will prolong the benignant charm of their visitation, and be at intervals closer to your heart than even the causes of sadness that environ you.

You will not, Miss C., disdain the solicitude of a sincere friend, who is interested for you while you are suffering, and loves the sensibility of which he regrets he cannot beguile the pain. I think I would be willing to feel for a season all that you feel, in order to acquire an entire and poignant sympathy. This alone can convey the exquisite significance, the magic of soul, into the suggestions that seek to revive the depressed energy of a tender heart. I would exert the whole efficacy of a mind thus painfully instructed to soothe or to animate; I would look around for every truth and every hope to which heaven has imparted sweetness, for the sake of minds in grief; I would invoke whatever friendly spirit has power to shed balm on anxious or desponding cares, and unobserved, steal a part of the bitterness away; I would also attempt a train of *rigorous thinking*; I would not despair of some advantage from the application of *reasoning*. Indeed it is known too well, there are moments when the heart refuses all control, and gives itself without reserve to grief. It feels, and even cherishes emotions which it cannot yield up to any power less than that of heaven or of time. Arguments may vainly, sometimes, forbid the tears that flow for the affecting events of remembrance or anticipation. Arguments will not obliterate scenes whose every circumstance pierced the heart. Arguments cannot recall the victims of death. Dear affections!—the sources of felicity, the charm of life,—what pangs too they can cause! You have loved sensibility, you have cultivated it, and you are destined yet, I hope, to obtain many of its sweetest pleasures; but you see how much it must sometimes cost you. Contemn, as it deserves, the pride of stoicism; but still there are the most cogent reasons why sorrow should somewhere be restrained. It should acknowledge the limits imposed by judgment and the will of

Heaven. Do not yield your mind to the gloomy extinction of utter despondency. It still retains the most dear and valuable interests, which require to be saved from the sacrifice. Before the present circumstances took place, the wish of friendship would have been, that you might be long happily exempted from them; *now* it is that you may gain from them as high an improvement and a triumph as ever an excellent mind won from trial. From you an example may be expected of the manner in which a virtuous and thoughtful person has learnt to bear the melancholy events of life. Even at such a season it is not a duty to abandon the study of happiness. Do not altogether turn away from sweet hope with her promises and smiles. Do not refuse to believe that this dark cloud will pass away, and the heavens shine again; that happier days will compensate these hours that move in sadness. Grief will have its share—a painful share; but grief will not have your all, Caroline. There is good in existence still,—rich, various, endless,—the pursuit of which will elevate, and the attainment of which will crown you. Even your present emotions are the distresses of tender melancholy: how widely different from the anguish of guilt! Yours are such tears as innocence may shed, and intermingled smiles—pensive smiles, indeed, and transient, but expressive of a sentiment that rises toward heaven.

The most pathetic energies of consolation can be imparted by RELIGION alone, the never-dying principle of all that is happy in the creation. The firm persuasion that all things that concern us are completely every moment in the hands of our Father above, infinitely wise and merciful; that he disposes all these events in the best possible manner; and that we shall one day bless him amid the ardors of infinite gratitude for even his most distressing visitations;—such a sublime persuasion will make the heart and the character sublime. It will enable you to assemble all your interests together; your wishes, your prospects, your sorrows, and the circumstances of the persons that are dear to you, and present them in one devout offering to the best Father, the greatest Friend; and it will assure you of being in every scene of life the object of his kind, perpetual care.

Permit me, madam, to add, that one of the most powerful means towards preserving a vigorous tone of mind in unhappy circumstances, is to explore with a resolute eye the serious lessons which they teach. Events like those which you have beheld, open the inmost temple of solemn truth, and throw around the very blaze of revelation. In such a school, such a mind may make incalculable improvements. I consider a scene of death as being to the interested parties who witness it, a kind of *sacrament*, inconceivably solemn, at which they are summoned by the voice of heaven, to pledge themselves in vows of irreversible decision. Here then, Caroline, as at the high altar of eternity, you have been called to pronounce, if I may express it so, the *inviolable oath*; to keep for ever in view the momentous value of life, and to aim at its worthiest use, its sublimest end; to spurn with a last disdain, those foolish trifles, those

frivolous vanities, which so generally within our sight consume life, as the locusts did Egypt; and to devote yourself with the ardor of passion to attain the most divine improvements of the human soul; and in short, to hold yourself in preparation to make that interesting transition to another life, whenever you shall be claimed by the Lord of the World.

---

XXXI. TO MRS. R. MANT.

*Battersea, July 23, 1799.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,—Allow me to tell you that the varieties, the pleasures, or the mortifications of a sojourn in the busy world will never obliterate the remembrance of the most *meritorious individual* I met with in Chichester. In the short space that has elapsed, I have often thought of you. I have fancied to myself your mode of life, your walks in the fields, and your visits to your cousins. But however, when one experiences any change in respect to one's self, one is ready to imagine some change in every thing and person one knows, so that, if I were to revisit Chichester, one of the first inquiries of my eyes and my voice would be after *changes*. Though I have been absent but three or four weeks, I should ask, "What! are you quite the same kind of person?" "Is the circle of acquaintance the same?" "Is Watery Lane the same?" "The meeting just as it was?" "The General Baptists quite the same?" "The room I slept in, and all the pictures the same?" I know at least that *I* am too much the same. Oh! I pant for a grand revolution in all my soul and character. I wish for a sacred zeal, for devotional habits, and an useful life. How defective in all these while at Chichester! Conscience often told me, that though the situation was indeed unfavorable, yet no small part of the fault was in myself. I still feel, and shall ever feel, the regret of not having made those vigorous exertions which I might have made, and which, if made, might *perhaps* have had some considerable effect. I have almost wished sometimes, that I could have been there a season longer to make some kind of atonement to myself and the people. But the past is irrevocable. I hope the disapprobation with which I review it, will be an incentive, a strong incentive to a noble course hereafter. I have nothing particular to tell you. . . . You will wonder that I have not yet been in London, though I am within four miles of it, and see St. Paul's and Westminster Abbey in the distance every day. . . . It will be a great gratification if you will write to me soon, and copiously and carelessly as you would talk. I entreat you do not write it twice over, as you sometimes do; 'tis unnecessary, and it makes writing a serious labor. . . . Cultivate religion—confide in the unalterable goodness of a heavenly Father—rejoice in Jesus Christ, and remember me in your prayers—you are not forgotten in mine. Yours, with most friendly regard, J. FOSTER.\*

\* "May 1, 1797, Mr. Foster came to my house to live.—June 28, 1799,



## XXXII. TO MRS. E. MANT.

*Battersea, Dec. 31, 1799.*

. . . . I have been occupied a great part of my time, and lazy the rest; but never forgetful of the kindness I experienced, and the numberless pleasant hours which I spent in your house, and which claim a perpetual remembrance. I have very often wished to know and intended writing immediately to ask, how you are as to health, prospects, engagements, and society. How many thousand things we should have said, wished, debated; how many books we should have glanced into; how many living characters we should have examined, and admired or condemned; how many adventures we should have had, or recalled, or dreamed, if we had passed the last six months, like the former ones, in the same abode. However, though at a distance, and knowing nothing of each other's course, I trust the time has not been passed by either without some improvement. My sojourn here has been rich in lessons of various kinds; and this last day of the year calls me with a solemn, with, as it were, an expiring voice, to take an account of what has been accomplished in my heart and in my life, during the year that is gone, and through all the time that has passed by me never to be recalled. I feel it must be a mortifying and penitential account; how neglected have been the talents, how waste the precious hours, how little the good imparted to others! how cold the devotion ascending—scarce ascending, to heaven! My soul looks with most painful regret on various scenes of the past, and particularly on the negligent, spiritless, and unevangelical strain of my public ministrations at Chichester. I do not know whether it was possible to have done great good; but it certainly was possible to have zealously attempted it, and in this I greatly failed. I hope such recollections will have the effect to stimulate all my future efforts, and thus derive to me a valuable advantage, even from the guilty remissness of the past. Let us both preach to ourselves with all our might; let us say with a distinguished and devout hero, on the eve of a battle, "Perhaps I cannot inspire a generous ardor into those around me, but at least I will make sure of *one*." Let us pray fervently; let us read the book of God; let us embrace the salvation of Christ; let us exhort our friends to go to heaven; let us lead and show the way. There is a God of love; our sins can be pardoned through the sacrifice of the Redeemer; there is a Holy Spirit to guide us, a Providence to watch over us, and palms at last for the hands of conquerors of this sinful world to wear. What a glorious prospect then before us! Adieu to vanity; adieu to sloth; adieu to all unchristian fears, distrustful of the care and the strength of our blessed Father above. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

Mr. Foster went away to Battersea; he lived with me two years.—December 20, 1800, Mr. Foster paid us a friendly visit for a week.—*Mrs. Mant, MSS.*

I cordially sympathize with you in regard to that desolation of society and friendship to which you seem to be doomed. I wish some agreeable acquisitions of this kind may illuminate the pensive shade ; but if not, is it not a gracious hand that has marked your destiny ? Wait, then, till you see it accomplished, when unquestionably you will discover, with an exultation of gratitude and joy, that "all things have been done well." The friendliest wish I can form for you is, that the less you enjoy of worldly felicities, the more you may obtain of the divine ; that if God withholds from you any of his created blessings, it may be to give you more abundantly Himself ; in short, that "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ may be with you." Oh, it is happy to be entirely resigned to the will of God ; willing to travel by any path his wisdom appoints, through the vale of life and tears ; or at one word, when he shall call, to haste away with willing flight into his presence, to mingle with the sweet and endless society there. "In his presence is fulness of joy, and at his right hand are pleasures for evermore." . . .

---

XXXIII. TO THE REV. DR. FAWCETT.

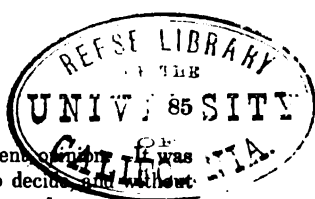
*Battersea, Jan. 15, 1800.*

DEAR SIR,—The pleasure with which I address one of my earliest and best benefactors, is mingled with a painful regret for having disappointed any of his hopes ; but is mingled too with a reviving confidence that it will not be a *final* disappointment. As a proof that the unfortunate wanderer has not lost entirely his interest in your friendly regards, your letter was extremely grateful to me. But what shall I say of the long time that has passed without an acknowledgment from me of a favor so little expected, and cordial to my feelings as one of the days of returning spring ? It were vain to attempt apology. I could plead only that each successive week I have intended to write to you, but that a certain fatality of procrastination, to which I have long been subjected in respect of writing, has prevailed over me here too. It is more manly to confess than to extenuate. Yet it grieves me much that appearances do warrant an imputation of such ingratitude as I am certain I can never feel ; and I will entreat you, dear sir, to lay aside in this one case the ancient rule of judging of the heart by the conduct. The sincere, unalterable respect with which I always think of you, assures my own mind that I have some claim to such an exception. I am very sorry for the conduct which leaves my *assertion* to stand the solitary testimony in my favor. Memory often recalls, with a sentiment of pensive but grateful interest, the season of my life which was passed under your immediate care ; and those instructions, those kind anxieties, those prayers, and that example, of which the effect, I trust, cannot be lost to the latest moment of my life, no, nor in that eternity beyond. Will you accept from even me the wish that your cares may not fail of a happy success, and an

abundant reward? But of their reward they *cannot* fail; that is independent even of their success; it will be conferred by Him who knows and approves the hearts of his faithful servants, while sometimes his wisdom denies to their efforts the desired effect.

I receive with pleasure, but not without diffidence of myself, your congratulations on a happy revolution of my views and feelings. Oh, with what profound regret I review a number of inestimable years nearly lost to my own happiness, to social utility, and to the cause and kingdom of Christ! I often feel like one who should suddenly awake to amazement and alarm, on the brink of a gloomy gulf. I am scarcely able to retrace exactly through the mingled dreary shades of the past, the train of circumstances and influences which have led me so far astray; but amid solemn reflection, the conviction has flashed upon me irresistibly, that I must be fatally wrong. This mournful truth has indeed many times partially reached me before, but never so decisively, nor to awaken so earnest a desire for the full, genuine spirit of a disciple of Jesus. I see clearly that my strain of thinking and preaching has not been pervaded and animated by the evangelic sentiment, nor, consequently, accompanied by the power of the gospel, either to myself or to others. I have not come forward in the spirit of Paul, or Peter, or John; have not counted all things but loss that I might win Christ and be found in him. It is true indeed that this kind of sentiment, when strongly presented, has always appealed powerfully to both my judgment and my heart; I have yielded my whole assent to its truth and excellence, and often longed to feel its heavenly inspiration; but some malady of the soul has still defeated these better emotions, and occasioned a mournful relapse into coldness of feeling, and sceptical or unprofitable speculation. I wonder as I reflect;—I am amazed how indifference and darkness *could* return over a mind which had seen such gleams of heaven. I hope that mighty grace will henceforward for ever save me from such infelicity. My habitual affections, however, are still much below the pitch that I desire. I wish above all things to have a continual, most solemn impression of the absolute need of the free salvation of Christ for my own soul, and to have a lively faith in him, accompanied with all the sentiments of patience, humility, and love. I would be transformed,—fired with holy zeal; and henceforth live not to myself, but to Him that died and rose again. My utmost wish is to be a minor apostle; to be a humble, but active, devoted and heroic servant of Jesus Christ; and in such a character and course, to minister to the eternal happiness of those within my sphere. My opinions are in substance decisively Calvinistic. I am firmly convinced, for instance, of the doctrines of original sin, predestination, imputed righteousness, the necessity of the Holy Spirit's operation to convert the mind, final perseverance, &c., &c.

As to the doctrine of the divinity of Christ, I do not deny that I had once some degree of doubt, but not such a degree ever as to carry me



anything near the adoption of an opposite or different opinion, it was by no means disbelief; it was rather a hesitation to decide, and without much, I think, of the vanity of speculation. But for a long while past I have fully felt the necessity of dismissing subtle speculations and distinctions, and of yielding a humble, cordial assent to the mysterious truth, just *as* and *because* the scriptures declare it, without inquiring "How can these things be?" Even at the time I refer to, I had not the slightest doubt respecting the doctrine of the atonement. I have always, without the interval of a moment, deemed it a grand essential of Christianity. How still more emphatically welcome it becomes as one discovers more of one's own heart! I deem it probable that my views on this and other subjects were invidiously misrepresented to you and some more of my friends. I have witnessed in many instances, with a disgusting recoiling of the heart, an astonishing promptitude to impute *heresy* to a man whose expressions have varied from the common phraseology, or whose conclusions have been cautious, and not in the tone of infallibility.

Within the last year I have drawn from experiment, example, and reflection, very important lessons respecting the best *manner* of preaching, as to diction, elocution, kind of illustrations, introduction or rejection of *humorous* ideas, &c. The altogether of the manner I would choose, if I could seize it all at once, would be very different from my former style. From unfavorable habits of mind, and inauspicious public situations for the most part, I have acquired a disadvantageous elocution, which I fear will cost me considerable pains to correct. I have felt this particularly in my occasional public services about London, in which I have not in general felt free and happy, except in the missionary preaching in the villages, in which I have frequently been engaged. I have been so much occupied with the Africans since I came hither, and so gratified to prolong my stay within the advantages of the metropolis, that I have not yet begun to inquire after a regular station for preaching. Every consideration, however, and particularly the duty of making a renewed zealous effort for public good, calls me now to make the inquiry. I have as yet thought but of one or two individuals to whom I can write. I have a transient engagement or two that will take up part of the spring. I thank you for the pleasure with which I read your book. It appears to me a just, elegant, and forcible exhibition of the grand principles of vital Christianity.

My eyes are still not sound. Some of the symptoms, both from their nature and continuance, give me considerable apprehension. Mr. Greaves has given me ample details respecting the combined families, in which I am glad to find there is so much health and happiness.

Will you present my best respects to my old friend Mrs. Fawcett, who surrenders to advancing age, it seems, none of her energies, and to young Mr. and Mrs. F.? In writing once to Mr. Greaves, and repeatedly to Lanes, I felt it would be a capital indecorum to mention in the

slight way of making compliments, persons to whom I had promised, and still owe, I don't know how many sheets. If ever your time should allow, as your thoughts suggest, another friendly notice, I shall be so much the more gratified to receive, as I have not the remotest claim to expect, such a communication.

I am, dear sir, Yours, with great respect,

J. FOSTER.

---

XXXIV. TO MRS. R. MANT.

*Near Bristol, Feb. 17, 1801.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,—When I left you about Christmas, it would have appeared, in looking forward, a long time to have delayed writing to you till past the middle of February; but in looking back the time seems wonderfully short. This difference between the appearance of the past and of the future seems unfavorable to happiness, which I think would be more befriended by prospect appearing short, and retrospect appearing long. It looks but a short period since I quitted Chichester as a residence; but to look forward over the dim and shadowy field of so much time to come, seems a very long anticipation. However, my dear friend, though the train of future days seems in the prospect-vision to stretch out to a strangely protracted length, they will soon be gone. I congratulate you and myself that life is passing fast away. What a superlatively grand and consoling idea is that of Death! Without this radiant idea, this delightful morning-star, indicating that the luminary of Eternity is going to rise, life would, to my view, darken into midnight melancholy. Oh! the expectation of living *here*, and living *thus*, always, would be indeed a prospect of overwhelming despair! But thanks to that fatal decree that dooms us to die—thanks to that gospel which opens the vision of an endless life, and thanks, above all, to that Saviour-friend who has promised to conduct all the faithful through the sacred trance of death into scenes of paradise and everlasting delight! I have the most assured persuasion that you, my dear friend, are destined, at no very remote period, to make this sublime transition; and shall not this divine prospect console you for all you have lost and suffered, and animate you to triumph over every desolate feeling by which you are environed? If you are fatigued in life's journey—if the scene and the persons through which you pass are inhospitable—see yonder, the palace divine, the angel-friends, and the region of ever-blooming flowers are nigh! It is not far to go; be patient, go on, and live for ever.

With musings like these my mind is familiar. Everything that interests my heart leads me into this mingled emotion of melancholy and sublime. I have lost all taste for the light and the gay; rather, I never had any such taste. I turn disgusted and contemptuous from insipid and shallow folly, to lave in the stream, the tide of deeper sentiments. There I swim, and dive, and rise, and gambol, with all that wild delight

which would be felt by a fish, after panting out of its element awhile, when flung into its own world of waters by some friendly hand. . . . I have criminally neglected regular, studious thinking for many years: I must try whether it is now too late to resume a habit so essential to solid wisdom and real strength of mind. I have certainly learnt much from various society, and have in some degree improved my powers of social communication; but I feel in a most mortifying degree some mental and moral deficiencies, which I know that nothing can correct but a rigid discipline, which will absolutely require the seriousness of solitude. My greatest defects are in regard to religion, on which subject, as it respects myself, I want to have a profound and solemn investigation, which I foresee must be mingled with a great deal of painful and repentant feeling. What a serious task it is to confront one's self with faithful truth! and see one's self by a light that will not flatter! But it must be done, and the earliest season is therefore the best. At the last tribunal no one will regret having been a habitual and rigorous judge of self. It is an unhappy and enormous fault to live on amid uncertainties respecting the state of one's mind, and with occasional eclipses of those delightful hopes which shine from the other world. I must therefore assemble all my convictions around me, and finally settle the great account I have with God. . . .

---

XXXV. TO THE REV. JOSEPH HUGHES.

*Downend, March 18, 1801.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,—You gained nothing by your affected formality of address. What was the use of substituting *Sir* for *Friend*, when amid the plaudits of the circle to which I repeatedly read your letter, I could so easily explode its commencement by the proud feeling with which I said, "The writer of this is my friend?" Your first sentence was meant as a vulture's beak; I thus brake it in an instant.

I should have been still more proud of this luminous friend, if he had been so luminous as to leave me no refuge in the consciousness of his mistaking my character; if his faculties had been so powerful as to be *just*, though that justice had been in a language ten times more severe. While I acknowledge his strong sight, I feel that he chases me by moonlight, which allows me to squat in a shade where he cannot find me. If he were *not* my friend, how I should laugh to see him pass by in pursuit of his own shadow; but as he *is* my friend, I had rather suffer by his possessing an unerring sense. I have had several occasions of knowing that you do not understand me entirely; there is both good and evil in my heart, which you have not seen. There is yet an apartment or two in the interior of my mind, into which you have not quite sagacity enough to penetrate, nor quite candor enough for me to admit you.

This deduction from your intellectual force still leaves me to admire

it. And here again, what a miserable philosophy of the human mind you must have adopted, not to be certain that, unless interest or malignity intervene, superior mind is necessarily attached to superior mind all over the world. Genius hails its few brothers with a most fraternal warmth. I have too much talent not to be attracted by yours, and to attract it; you could not shake me off, if you would. We are both elevated so much as to confront each other conspicuously through the clear space above the heads of the crowd, and cannot help a pointed recognition of each other's mental visage. Thus I often converse with you in imagination, and revolt at paper and pens, which tell sentiments so faintly, so formally, so slowly, and so few. Our minds are two rival streams, and whatever invidious tracts dissociate their courses, they *must* approximate; they are destined to meet again; and to swell and exult in their confluence. Or, do you dissent from this estimate of yourself and of me. Do you assign yourself to a *humbler* rank? Be content, then; it were ridiculous for a gudgeon to affect the company of a whale. Or do you degrade me from the equality? Abandon, then, such an unfortunate production; it were still more ridiculous for a whale to pursue a gudgeon. It was not any feeling of hurt vanity, was it, that dictated your vindictive sentences? the vanity of a mind which, regarding me as a thermometer, was vexed to perceive its own impotence of heat? It would be enough, you know, in that case, just to say, *the instrument is a bad one*; thus you have very properly ascribed my silence to "apathy." If I am the victim of apathy, it must be by that fascination which betrays into the very thing most anxiously avoided; for, next to remorse, there is no state of the mind I dread and detest so much. Perhaps you think there can be in the world no stronger test of feeling, or the want of it, than the bundle of snakes you sent me last,—in sooth, a lock of Medusa's hair. It is a very humorous thing, though, to see a philosopher attempting to torment a stone.

But you allow me a few "sensibilities," which you say faithfully attend my dear self. Indeed, you treat them very rudely; you are like boys attempting to catch birds; however soft and gentle the approach, if the coy things fly away to the next bush, the wicked brats then throw stones after them. You frighten my poor sensibilities, you do; and you must forgive them, if, like timid little chickens, they run under my own wing at sight of the great dun-colored hawk, with fierce black eyes, and a shrill note; you must not tempt them to fly along in friendly company with the malicious fowl, as I have seen foolish little birds sometimes do, to be devoured.

You say "*many* have received the same impression." While at Battersea I knew perfectly that all the world was thinking of me; but since I left, I had in my humility supposed it probable that mighty multitude might have forgotten me, as I knew that *absent* trifles could not occupy its majestic thoughts. Or, if I thought it all the world's *duty* to be thinking of me, it was of course for me to attribute to it somewhat of my own sad vice of forgetting the absent.

I have been too much flattered, you say. In truth, it is currently said, we are both spoiled by our friends; but, I having heard it said in addition, that your spoiling makes you very *ostentatious*, you will forgive me, if in my solicitude to avoid this consequence of *my* spoiling, I have fallen into the opposite fault of reserve. But I am not irrecoverable; a little more of this soft incense might tempt me forth again. Instead of this, you salute me in your Philippics with the smoke of brimstone. You wish the criminal's "heart broken." I should be sorry this operation were performed by your surgical hand, as the ingredients of your letter seem to indicate there are no *cordials* remaining in your shop.

You must have been taking a month's instructions from the "Xantippe" you have so kindly destined me to "love and cherish;" but as I am to have her in order to learn to write friendly letters, how much better a man I must be than you, who have only learnt to write virulent ones. If you have not been congenial, you could not have profited so fast. Let me know, however, who she is; for I cannot help suspecting *your* language is not *hers*; I do think any woman of so much sense would have expressed it in more gracious terms.

I cannot join in your reverence for that amazing, busy activity of the world on which you turn so poetical, to mortify me with the contrast. Is it cynical to ask, "What is effected by it all?" Much of this huge bustle seems to me as important, if it were as innocent, as the rippling course of a rill, or the frisks of a company of summer flies. If I had the power of touching a large part of mankind with a spell, amid all this inane activity, it should be this short sentence, "*Be quiet, be quiet.*" Particularly, I have often thought that the moral and literary world suffers the greatest mischief from the crowd of authors. Seriously, it appears to me an enormous impediment to popular improvement; so much that is indifferent, or worse, occupies the time and the paper that else might and would be appropriated to the noblest productions of mind. . . . Fortunately, however, the world has not beheld all that genius can do. There remain two mighty spirits who have not yet disclosed all their terrible potencies on the "foughten field." When the cause of virtue and truth is just sinking in destruction, we two shall rush forth amain like *Mounier and Dessaix* at Marengo, and change the aspect of the world in a moment!

You suggest the idea of *fame*. Cold as you pronounce me, I should prefer the deep animated affection of one person whom I could entirely love, to all the tribute fame could levy within the amplest circuit of her flight; which would be of the same value to me, alive or dead, as the cries of penguins about Cape Horn at this hour. A Christian surely should despise this object; and I can suppose a being too elevated and too happy to think of it. Imagine a seraph, laving in the boundless ocean of mind, or flying through the hemisphere with a comet in his hand,—he cares nothing about fame.

I wished to have got together a row of *nettle* sentences like yours; but,



verli, I am either too dull or too kind. I have been walking in the fields, inhaling the mild breath of nature, and meeting her sweetest smile. I felt the charm through all my affections, and forcibly felt, spite of all your accusations, and the appearances that seem to warrant them, that you have a large and unalterable interest there. I have returned quite in the disposition to acknowledge my neglect and my indolence, and to deplore that I have indeed proceeded but a little way on the "path of celestials;" but take me along with you; I am ready to advance as your associate and rival onward to the frontier of the world;—nor stop there!

My mind needs amelioration; it is a strange one. I am obtaining the analysis of it, piece by piece, at the cost of a great and sometimes painful attention.

I congratulate you on whatever possibilities of happiness you have gained in the addition to your family. Has no one suggested it may be time for you to study the subject of education? Have you really begun your plan of *Adversaria*? The series of *mine* has reached some number between five and six hundred. Let me urge you not to neglect this. You luxuriate among happy sentences and images, which ought not to be let vanish, like fairy bowers, to be seen no more. Take one book for pointed, philosophic, or fanciful articles; another exclusively for the striking passages in your unwritten sermons. I would eagerly begin such a plan as this last but for the ominous state of my eyes, which very often concurs with other anticipations, and with the native tone of my heart, to wrap me in the saddest melancholy. I have a thousand times recollected a thought uttered by you in one of our rambles in a gloomy mood: "Say I shall be damned—how foolish, then, to think of these trifling introductory ills; but say, I shall be saved, obtain boundless felicity, in a short time—how weak then, to complain of these momentary pains!"

You do no more than justice to the "circle" where I have spent some of the most delicious months of my life. You know who is the centre of that circle; near enough to her I have constantly felt as if I could pass an age away without ever being tired.\* . . . The ladies to whom

\* "The course of my life since I left Battersea has included a good deal of the agreeable. The greater part has still been spent among ladies; and I enjoy the society of amiable women beyond any other. I am always happy when the sentimentalism of my character, which otherwise evaporates in vague wishes, and the visions of fancy, finds real objects to interest it up to the tone of *complacency*,—how much further this depeneth saith not. When thus interested, I become animated, profuse of sentiment, passionately fond of conversation, and time flies away with a strange rapidity. A great part of my time I have passed with the younger Mrs. C. and Miss S., luxuriating over a wide diffusion of sentiment and fancy. Sometimes we read; but this seldom succeeds much, for we generally digress to an endless series of remarks and opinions of our own. We have agitated a great number of interesting questions; and have sometimes found and sometimes scattered flowers, over the region of thought. These two ladies are greatly beyond the common order of intellect and taste.

I have read this response are astonished at such effrontery in a criminal, as they say I really am, almost to the extent of your charge, before his judge. I assured them that a gallant defence was one of the best methods to propitiate him; he would be most dogged to a coward. . . .

---

XXXVI. TO THE REV. DR. RYLAND.

*April, 1801.*

DEAR SIR,—I am ashamed to have detained the sermon so long;\* as I read it immediately after receiving it from you, and with still more attention since. I have not been in Bristol since I saw you, except one wet night to inquire after a parcel, when I was unfit to call or stop anywhere.

I am not certain to what extent you would wish me to express an opinion, though very certain that to *any* extent your candor would forgive the freedom. If it were a question as to publishing the sermon or not, I would venture, after acknowledging in very strong terms the ingenuity, the variety, and the forcible description with which it abounds, to suggest a very few general considerations.

As *first*, placing myself in the situation, I should be very reluctant to appear conspicuously in the class of what have been denominated “dam-

While they are employed in working I sit down, sometimes a number of hours together, and pour forth all my imagination or knowledge can supply; and they call me enthusiastic, cynical, proud, or singular, by turns. I take a peculiar pleasure in dissecting the system of fashion, parade, ceremony, and trifles. I have examined, ridiculed, and execrated it in a hundred forms, and with every variety of language and illustration. They substantially agree with me, but accuse me of darting for ever toward the extreme. . . . I preach here with considerable pleasure; and the family have expressed their wish that I may in some manner settle here. I often see various company here, and in Bristol, sometimes with pleasure; but often, every man who has tried the world knows, company is assembled for the assassination of time;—time destined, alas, to perish by a mightier hand, but men are willing to assist in its destruction. My mind is still familiar with melancholy musings; no place can banish them, and no society. There is ‘*that something still which prompts the eternal sigh.*’ Yet I would not be insensible to the pleasures that life does yield; I would not be insensible to the value of those that are past.”—*Mr. Foster to Mrs. Bensonell*, June 11, 1800.

\* A discourse on Isa. xiv. 10, “Art thou become like unto us?” composed and delivered at Northampton when the author was in his twenty-third year (Nov. 26, 1775), and preached again at Bristol in 1776; “it seemed each time of its delivery to be heard with unusual seriousness, and in one instance, at least, had a very deep and salutary effect. (See the biographical account of the Rev. William Kilpin in Dr. Rippon’s Baptist Register, vol. i., p. 257). A copy having been shown in a distant part of the kingdom to some very respectable friends who urged its publication,” Dr. R. “felt inclined to follow their advice,” and prepared it for the press; but relinquished the intention in consequence, most probably, of the suggestions contained in Mr. Foster’s letter.

nation writers." With the exception of Baxter and a few more, I am afraid that those who have expatiated most on infernal subjects, have felt them the least. A predilection for such subjects, and a calm, deliberate, minute, exhibition of them, always strikes me as a kind of *Christian cruelty*, the spirit of an *auto da fé*. I sincerely doubt the utility of a laborious, expanded display of the horrors of hell: as far as I have had the means of observing the actual effect, I have found it far the greatest where one would anxiously wish it might not exist at all—in the minds of the timid, scrupulous, and melancholic. The utmost space I would allot in my writings to this part of the revelations of our religion should not at any rate exceed the proportion which, in the New Testament, this part of truth bears to the whole of the sacred book, the grand predominant spirit of which is love and mercy.

2. Though for a passing illustration it would be striking, I greatly doubt if such an application of the text, so formally and definitively made, be warrantable. Is the passage anything more than a finely poetic account of the simple fact, the death of the tyrant? No part of this sublime ode appears to me to look beyond the grave, *the state of being dead*, or to bear any reference to the feelings or accostings of departed spirits.

3. Does not extreme *particularity* on such a subject lose the effect, either by harassing the feelings into a revolting aversion to think of the subject at all, or sometimes by supplying a *half-amusing* detail to curiosity, like Virgil's Tartarus, rather than making a concentrated mighty impression on the heart.

4. I doubt if revelation has anywhere given ground to suppose, or if reason, without revelation, can be cruel enough to suppose, such a superlative malicious and horrid style of greetings, even in the infernal world. Something very different from this would be indicated in our Lord's description of the solicitude of the rich man, that his wicked connexions might not come into the same place of torment—a feeling surely which would not, if they *did* come, hail them with such an execrable malignity of pleasure.

5. I feel, in the strain of some parts of the salutations of the wretched spirits, something too *familiar*, and even approaching too much to the air of *spiteful fun*, for the dreadful solemnity of the scene, and the supposed profound and infinite intensity of their feelings.

6. In the instantaneous transition, towards the latter end, from hell to heaven, with the use of the same language in heaven as so lately with so much adaptedness in hell, I felt some degree of violence. It looks like an *expedient* to escape from the persecution of the former society and salutations. It has the appearance of needing to perform a kind of *quarantine* after coming from the great kingdom of plagues.

Other remarks on particular passages may have occurred, but are scarcely of importance enough to be mentioned.

The few observations I have expressed are entirely submitted, as being the dictates of a taste which may be wrong; and the unceremonious

manner in which they are communicated, is owing to that freedom which I always feel the most completely with those for whose judgment and candor I have the most entire respect; of *you*, therefore, I shall not need to entreat forgiveness.

I am, dear sir, your sincere friend and servant,  
J. FOSTER.

XXXVII. TO THE REV. JOSEPH HUGHES.

*Downend, Dec., 1801.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,—A small number of intervals so long as that since I wrote to you before, will conclude the short day of life,—a life not very auspicious to the best order of mental intercourse; for letters do not deserve any such name—and this is one of the principal causes of my dilatoriness in writing them; a letter (though I am very glad to receive one) is so poor a substitute for the expansive discussion and romance of four or six hours. I was more gratified with the intercourse of your last visit than in any former season of my communications with you; and felt after you went away, great regret that our situations are so distant from each other. I always feel that your society has the effect of a powerful mental discipline; and I could not help sketching in fancy the large augmentation of knowledge and power I should derive from the earnest, habitual co-operation of two minds, certainly well adapted to exercise each other. I should be happy to flatter myself that future time may have some chances of bringing us into more frequent or long-continued contact.

. . . Here one recollects that prince of magicians, Coleridge; whose mind, too, is clearly more original and illimitable than Hall's. Coleridge is indeed sometimes less perspicuous and impressive by the *distance* at which his mental operations are carried on. Hall works his enginery *close by you*, so as to endanger your being caught and torn by some of the wheels; just as one has felt sometimes when environed by the noise and gigantic movements of a great mill. I am very sorry that by means of a short-hand writer, or by any other means, some of Hall's sermons cannot be secured and printed. It is probable they would on the whole be equal to Saurin's; as to manly simplicity, much preferable; for I now dislike Saurin's ingenious arrangements. I read yesterday his sermon on the Passions; the greatest I think that I ever read or heard. . . . Hall spoke of you, and attributed "a great deal" (I believe was the expression) "of genius," but reprobated your written style, on the same account that I always do; its want of simplicity. I have heard in Bristol that Coleridge means to go and take his family to France.

At the invitation of Mrs. Snooke's family, I went to Bourton, to Coles's ordination; not at all caring, as you may suppose, about the ordination; but pleased with an occasion of visiting the family, though sorry that *one*

of them was absent in London, and sorry not to meet you there, as I half expected. Hinton was there with a very superior sermon. I like Coles very much for his equal mixture of sense, piety, simplicity (as appears), and kindness. . . .

---

#### XXXVIII. TO MRS. R. MANT.

*Downend, Dec. 14, 1801.*

THE sight of frost and snow occasions me a mortifying recollection, that so the earth was clad when I last wrote to you, and that therefore almost a whole year has intervened. I feel it very shameful, and am utterly at a loss for apology; indeed apology, when the most plausible, is a very shabby substitute for propriety of action. If, however, you could see into my soul, you would perceive the regard I have always felt to remain undiminished. . . . My father and mother, and each of my very few other friends, have the same accusation to make, and to them I am reduced to the same style of penitential confession. I say "very few friends," correctly, for I have not added one to the list since I saw you. I have but little ambition this way, for there is a kind of convergency in my feelings, which makes it quite impossible for me to be much attached to many. With wonder I hear some people talk of one dear friend, and another most intimate friend, and a third very particular friend, and twenty, or twenty hundred charming friends, all of whom they are equally attached to, and every one of whom they are so *infinitely* glad to see; you would suppose their hearts were large enough to fill the globe. At the same time, I by no means vote for the total dedication of affections to *one* object; this always appears to me misanthropic, and therefore immoral. It is absurd too to imagine, that any one person can possess such a supreme monopoly of excellence, that the claims of all other beings are annihilated. I am pleased to find or believe that there is some good in every one, and sorry to find that no one is without some fault; and when I consider how many faults I have myself, I scarcely venture to flatter myself that any one can ever be very deeply or very long attached to me. I have the sincerest value for affection, but am unwilling to take the pains to deserve it; and it were ridiculous to expect it to come gratuitously.

I have been, since I wrote to you last, just the same kind of being I was before, and just similarly employed. I have been wishing for innumerable things I have made no effort to obtain; as, for instance, to be very learned, to be very wise, to be very eloquent, to be very pleasing, to improve very fast, to do some little good, to gain a decisive self-government, to get rid of a number of infamous bad habits, which have long been and still remain desperately attached to me, &c.; but all this will not come down, like gentle April showers, from the sky; all these things require that a man set about conjuring might and main, and—I *am no conjurer*.

. . . . Imagination has often placed before me, since I saw it, your corner of Chichester; but chiefly that little quiet house in which I have passed so many interesting hours. I am willing to believe your health is at least as tolerable as when I saw you. It was then winter. You were to walk out a great deal when the spring and summer came; *did* you do your duty? Sweet verdure, meads, trees, flowers, birds, and the spirit of health did not fail to invite you; did you? is it possible, thus courted, that you could refuse? Yes, my friend, I know you so well as to be afraid, even though I know that no one has a more animated taste for these pleasures, that you *did* refuse. I shall never forget the rural beauty that so often regaled my solitary musings in your neighborhood. I shall never forget that Watery Lane, and the adjacent delicious meadows. My present locality is, in this respect, by no means so charming. . . . If your county partook of the same bounty of nature as other parts, it must have been a delicious year. I am persuaded you find in religious felicities the best compensation for defects of satisfaction from the world, and even from friends. The supreme Friend is always accessible, and always infinitely kind. Let us endeavor, my dear friend, to embrace this truth, as if it were a benignant angel, to our hearts, and it will pour the energy of a divine consolation into the soul. The habitual melancholy of my spirits increases each year. I am not fit for life. My eyes are not much worse, but no better than when I saw you. . . .

---

XXXIX. TO MRS. R. MANT.

*Downend, March 9, 1802.*

. . . . I was so much ashamed of my negligence when I wrote before, and am so very much delighted to hear from you again, that I feel myself quite compelled to sit down and write to you immediately. You may, my friend, be assured that, writing or silent, I retain the same sincere and friendly regard which I have ever felt, and I think it cannot die away till memory fail. Your virtues and your kindness often return on my remembrance with a very grateful influence, something like what I have felt this morning in observing the first symptoms of approaching spring. I always deem you one of the persons most eminently deserving to be happy that I have known; and I am persuaded, I am *certain*, you *will* be happy, and sublimely so. I cannot be sanguine in painting for you scenes of pleasure in *this* world,—alas, hope as long ceased to be sanguine for *myself*;—but, what will soon signify this world to us? we are passing away with all the speed of time; let us look forward to the grand vision beyond the shades of Death! *There* is our country; there is the sweet paradise of peace and ever-blooming delights; there is our Father's house. I have been thinking for some time past, with more than usual clearness and seriousness of thought, of the vanity of all things in this life. It has not been a vain specula-

tion, just adapted to be uttered in so many sentences, to be soon forgotten both by the speaker and those that hear, but a cogent, convincing, and, in some degree, influential train of thought. The effect of it has been, in a measure, to make me more fervent in supplicating the final felicity of the soul, be the present life what it may; to make me more resigned to the determinations of Providence, and more concerned to fulfil the *duties* of this transient period, whatever become of its pleasures. We have passed a large, a very large part of our life—soon the end will come; and when we look back from the region of immortality, how trivial will appear all the present sorrows and cares—trivial, except in point of *utility*, in which point they may have been most important and advantageous. “These light afflictions, which are but for a moment, shall work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.”

I often sympathize with the desolate feelings which you suffer while surrounded by ———, of whom, on this very account, it is impossible for me not to entertain a very mean opinion. But be comforted; you have had very sufficient evidence that their habits, feelings, thoughts, and tastes, are by no means adapted to mingle with yours, and *therefore* you are left solitary. Shall you be sorry that your mind is too serious, too thoughtful, and too religious, to suit their society? Could you be willing, in these important points, to humble yourself down to a complacent agreement with their levity or their oddity? You ought to feel your superiority, and dismiss the anxious wish for a companionship which you have amply found you cannot purchase but by descending to their level; a level where you would never feel happy, if you *did* descend to it. Is not this fair consolation? . . . And oh! above all, think of your great Father in heaven, whose friendship *can* be gained, and daily enjoyed, and kept for ever! This grand idea often flashes on my mind like lightning from the sky, while I am musing over my desolate feelings, something like yourself, and regretting the want of those tender connexions which sometimes seem as if they would give life so much more interest and value. The more totally we are devoted to God, my friend, the more independent we shall be for pleasure on all other beings. What a sublime consolation! if we can *not* have the creatures, we *can* have the Creator. And then, ere long, we shall see and love, and be loved by the *noblest* of his *creatures*, the great inhabitants of that superior world, where none of the imperfections of vain and fickle mortals can intrude. . . .

---

XL. TO MRS. E. MANT.

*Downend, Feb. 1, 1803*

My memory is, in general, sufficiently defective to fulfil all its duties of forgetting—with the most laudable punctuality; but on this occasion

I have charging and enjoining it to be peculiarly faithful in its task of oblivion ; I mean in respect of the time when I wrote last, and when you replied. I well remember the *contents* of your letter, but I do not remember the *date*, and I dare not open it just now for fear of seeing that date.

My remembrance of you does not depend on particular dates of months and days, nor on any other thing foreign to that internal mind in which it faithfully and permanently resides. There it would always exist without any external object to awaken it or keep it alive, and always connected with a very cordial friendly feeling. Yet sometimes this remembrance is forcibly recalled by anything that resembles any part of your house, your furniture, your vine, or any of the scenes in the vicinity of Chichester. This association of ideas is a very curious thing ; here is an instance of it—the elegant little drawing which you gave me has been out of sight a considerable time, in one of my boxes, whence I just now took it out. No sooner did it appear than a swarm of recollections got about me, presenting, as with a hundred tiny fairy hands, a hundred other miniature pictures to my fancy ; as, for instance, portraits of you, of Mr. De —, of Miss W—, and many other persons ; the pictures in the little room which I once occupied, and a sight of your *vine* ; but here imagination was to produce a double effect at the same time ; for I would not see it fruitless and leafless, but made it appear in a green and tantalizing form, with several such good-natured clusters bending almost within the casement for me to take 'em, but in vain ! But how often this very object has been before me in reality, and not as a vision of imagination. Yes, I think of it, and ask myself with a kind of wonder, “ Have I really been very often in that very place, where these objects are real ? ” I feel it difficult fully to grasp the idea, that this person—I—am the same that have been a long time in *that* place, and am now in *this* place, so far removed. Did I really once live at Chichester ? I really do believe I did. I certainly either did, or have dreamed that I did ; and I seem to have the images before me even now of many things and persons which I saw there, and something very like recollection of things that I did and said there. I seem to recollect a neat meeting-house in which methinks I used to walk till I wore one of the aisles so much as to alarm some of the good people for the safety of the place. There was a long, solitary, rural lane, called “ Watery Lane,” in which I verily think I used sometimes to muse ; and I seem to recollect even now some of the sentiments that I felt there, and some of the objects which I saw. Would you believe that I recollect an incomparably beautiful reflection of the sky in a small piece of water there ; a grasshopper of very great size ; an adventure with an ox ; a pair of magnificent butterflies ; and a most beautiful rainbow scene, which I at the time anxiously charged my imagination to retain for ever : not to mention all the apparitions and horrid visions that I conversed with in that place ? It is very gratifying thus to be able to retain the images of some objects



and scenes long after they have been removed far from sight. But what a number of ideas imparted by objects once present to these eyes are irrevocably gone! Since I left you more than three years and a half have now elapsed, a considerable and serious space to have advanced toward the final, fatal hour. Many that both of us then knew alive, are now removed to the invisible region. To us, my friend, the time will come, and no point to which it is possible for our life to be protracted can justly be called remote, while we see time pass so fast away. Well, and let it come! I am persuaded my excellent friend still regards the prospect of death as the prime of her pleasures. And with this sublime consciousness, how little you can envy the vain pleasures around you! These pleasures will soon fade into a dreary autumn; yours are beginning to bud into the living green of an eternal spring. You would not exchange—no enlightened mind would exchange—one of the consolatory and radiant ideas that beam upon you sometimes from *hereafter*, for all the delights for which fools solicit and worship this world. Say to yourself, "I have not parade and splendor, nor giddy juvenile gaiety, nor amusements, nor so much of the kind sympathies of friendship as I could wish; but I have the promises and the fidelity of a God, the assurance of a guardian Providence, the intercession of a Redeemer, the visions of Eternity, the prospects of Paradise." My friend, I love to suggest such ideas to *you*, because they are appropriate to you. If I were to meet some of your gay neighbors in a pensive mood, I should not know how to console them, but with you I have no difficulty.

Thoughts of this kind would not come with so good a grace from me, if I myself were, the while, enjoying all the pleasures of this life. But the case is not so. My lot has probably some advantages over yours, but it is not such as to prevent my needing the full force of the consolations which I wish to suggest to you. And, my friend, would it be a good thing for life to be so crowded with temporal felicities as to make us forget eternity? Take for your motto the text, "All things work together for good to them that love God." . . . .

I do not rate the social intercourse so low as that I could not wish you had some one or two pleasant friends to beguile and exhilarate your long evenings, this wintry season. But, my friend, we cannot *transform* our neighbors; . . . . we cannot *create* interesting human beings; nor can we bring them flying through the air from distant places, like the witches that used to ride on broomsticks, and make them, at will, alight by the fireside. Consider, too, that as we cannot make others such as we wish, so neither do we choose to make ourselves such as *they* wish. My friend might have more society, if she would only be vain and frivolous; but will she, for the sake of the society, give up the dignity of character which is of more value to her than that which she might gain by sacrificing it? . . . .

. . . . My mind is perhaps gradually but very slowly improving in knowledge, and the power of displaying and using it. My habits are

more retired and solitary than in the former part of the time of my residence here, and more than half the visits that I make are rather from a kind of duty of office than from inclination.

My long respected friend, Mr. Hughes, has spent a month in this neighborhood each autumn since I have been here. His company is always the highest excitement of my faculties. He is a very superior man.

. . . . I find myself not completely formed for friendship, for I often seclude myself in gloomy abstraction, and say, "All this availeth me nothing."

---

XLI. TO MRS. R. MANT.

*Downend, April or May, 1803.*

I do not know what day of the month it is, nor whether it be April or May, but I believe it is some days past the time that I promised to write to you. The last week or two I have been very busy between society and some dry, laborious composition that I have been about. It always gives me the sincerest pleasure to hear from you, and I therefore thank you for your last letter, which, however, gave me less pleasure than some of your former ones, on account of its description of the state of your health. I can completely feel that such a headache, for a considerable portion of the fine part of the year, must be a most distressing companion, and am reduced again to the impotent wish that something could be recommended or done that should relieve you. One often feels it a melancholy thing to see or know that a friend suffers, and to be unable to do more than repeat the lesson of patience. That lesson, however, becomes forcible and important, when it is recollected that he who sends afflictions is the Infinitely Good and Wise,—who does all things well, and never gives his servants pain, even for a moment, but for their advantage. Remember, my friend, what a sublime compensation he is able to make you for all these troubles, and often read and muse on those promises in which he has engaged to make you eternally happier for the present pains. Think how completely all the griefs of this mortal life will be compensated by one age, for instance, of the felicities beyond the grave, and then think that one age multiplied ten thousand times, is not so much to eternity as one grain of sand is to the whole material universe. Think what a state it will be to be growing happier and happier still as ages pass away, and yet leave something still happier to come. Think whether the most adoring and emphatical gratitude will not be often kindled amidst those never-ending ages, when it is felt that no small part of this felicity is the strict consequence of those pains and griefs which were so oppressive in the poor state of mortal life. It would seem a great thing if I were authorized to prophesy to you, that within a month you should obtain perfect vigorous health, be surrounded by the most interesting friends, and amidst unlimited afflu-

ence ; all which you should retain to the last week of your life ; with what elation of feeling I should at first be eager to write the prediction ; and what an object of envy you would soon become. But oh, what a despicable trifle would be all this compared with what is really before you, on the assurance of the word of Him that cannot lie ! And if the latter were, you were certain, within one month of your attainment, would not you feel the most animated emotion at the prospect ? Let not the difference between this supposed month, and the uncertain length of time before you, which may extend through a number of years, oppressed by languor and affliction, extinguish all the pleasure of such a hope. Let us devote our most serious industry to the great concern of being habitually prepared for the coming of the Son of Man.

There are many affecting admonitions. I have been acquainted ever since I came into this neighborhood, with the widow of a man whom I knew and highly respected, and who died two or three years since, leaving this widow and two daughters (young women of very great excellence) in Bristol, where I have generally called on them when I have spent a few hours in the town. Yesterday (not having called on them for several weeks) I entered with a lively, unthinking air, the parlor where the elder lady and one of the daughters were sitting at work, and said in a gay voluble manner, "How does the world go ? how have you all been since I saw you ? where's Sarah ?" I had slightly, at my entrance, perceived a certain gravity somewhat more than usual, but did not particularly mind it, as they were a habitually grave family, being Quakers. After some hesitation, the daughter replied, "You have not heard then of our loss ; Sarah is dead."

I suppose your town has scarcely escaped the influenza, which has been so extensive and fatal. Most people in this neighborhood have had it, and some have been carried off. I have been entirely exempt. The complaint in my eyes is more troublesome during all the warmer part of the year than in the winter ; of course I begin to feel it now in the spring. It is often such as to require some exercise of patience, besides being a gloomy omen, as I still consider it, of the final loss of sight. You cannot wonder that this is a melancholy anticipation, sufficient to damp all the gaiety of life, if I had any inclination of that kind. The double complaint in my throat is not quite gone, but materially better. I am sorry to think it probable that you are debarred from the luxuries of this delicious season. I can answer for the enchantment you feel, if you are able sometimes to take a walk up the lane and through the fields. The whole welcome visitation of blossoms, sweet verdure, cuckoos, and nightingales, is come down on the earth, and made it all a new world within the last month. All the beauties of the scene have been displayed to me this afternoon in an extended rural walk, in which I anxiously endeavored to seize all the magic images, and fix them in my mind, for a perpetual Paradise of Fancy to have recourse to, perhaps after I lose the power of receiving any more images by the eye. I could not help

being amazed at the power which could thus, by means that none can understand, and in the space of a few weeks, or even days, pour such a deluge of charms over the creation. We should cultivate as much as possible the habit of being led by everything we contemplate to the great First Cause. . . . .

---

Here it becomes necessary to advert to Foster's literary pursuits. It appears from the preceding correspondence, that even while at Brearley, Foster entertained some indeterminate projects of authorship. With this view, probably, he commenced, before the age of twenty, the practice of committing to paper observations on natural objects, illustrations of human character, and reflections on morals and religion. From these he selected such as appeared worthy of preservation, and formed them into a series, carefully written and numbered, under the quaint title of "A Chinese Garden of Flowers and Weeds." In the present volume it has already been quoted as "the Journal." It was continued through successive years, and the last portion appears to have been written during his residence at Downend. It contains in all eight hundred and ten articles. On his return from Ireland he informs Mr. Hughes that he was engaged on "a kind of moral Essay;" the subject, however, is not mentioned. Of his early productions none have been preserved, excepting the following Essay, which will be read, not without interest, as a specimen of his juvenile style of thinking.

---

#### ON THE GREATNESS OF MAN.

MANKIND viewed collectively, as an assemblage of beings, presents to contemplation an object of astonishing magnitude. It has spread over this wide world to essay its powers against every obstacle, and every element; and to plant in every region its virtues and its vices. As we pass along the plains, we perceive them marked by the labors, the paths, or the habitations of man. Proceeding forward across rivers, or through woods, or over mountains, we still find man in possession on the other side. Each valley that opens, and each hill that rises before us, presents a repetition of human abodes, contrivances, and appropriations; for each house, and garden, and field (in some places almost each tree), reminds us that there is a person somewhere who is proud to think and say, "This is mine."

All the beautiful and rugged varieties of earth, from the regions of snow to those of burning sand, have been pervaded by man. If we sail

to countries beyond the seas, we find him still, though he may disclaim our language, our manners, and our color. And if we discover lands where he is not, we presently quit them, as if the Creator too were a stranger there. Here and there indeed a desert retreat is inhabited by an ascetic, whom the solemnity of solitude has drawn thither; or by a felon, whom guilt has driven thither.

While he extends himself thus over the world, behold his collective grandeur. It appears prominent in great cities built by his own hands;—it is seen in structures that look like temples erected to Time, which promise by their strength to await the latest years of his continuance with men; and seem to plead by their magnificence against the decree which dooms them to perish when he shall abandon them;—it is seen in wide empires, and in armies, which may be called the talons of imperial power—to give security to happiness where that power is just, but for cruel ravage where it is tyrannical;—it is displayed in fleets; in engines which operate as if informed with a portion of the actuating power of his own mind; in the various productions of beauty; the discoveries of science; in subjected elements, and a cultivated globe. The sentiment with which we contemplate this scene is greatly augmented when imagination bears her flaming torch into the enormous shade which overspreads the past, and passes over the whole succession of human existence, with all its attendant prodigies. When we have made the addition for futurity, of supposing the human race extensively enlightened, apprised of their dignity and power, and combined in a far stricter union, till the vast ocean of mind prevail over all its accustomed boundaries, and sweep away many of the evils which oppress the world,—we may pause awhile and indulge our amazement. Such an aggregate view of the multitude, achievements, and powers of Man, is grand. It has the air of a general and endless triumph.

But we know that mere multitude is not greatness. An object that is great only by the assemblage of many separate objects which are not individually great, is constantly in hazard of being resolved, while we view it, into the diminutiveness of which it is composed; and the character of greatness cannot survive a moment the charm which seemed to compact them into *one*. Great objects undoubtedly display an augmented grandeur in conjunction; but as everything which depends on combination is subject to be annihilated by dissolution, that greatness alone is permanent, which resides in an object that is simple and indivisible. We can view without emotion a lofty and extensive building of stone; but show us a single rock of the same dimensions, and we gaze with admiration. And if a being were created who should possess physical powers and mental powers equal to those of the entire human race, he would be a much sublimer object than collective Man. Sometimes, suspended high in contemplation, we look down on the human world as an immense mass of active intelligence and power; but lowering gradually from our elevation, we find that our circle of view becomes less and

still less ample ; and we begin to perceive too the lines of division that traverse the scene in all directions, and dissect it into the perplexity and littleness of countries, states, and families. Descending still, we descry a separating space round each individual ; and deserted now by all the buoyancy of fancy, the mind at last falls down into one of these interstices, to look round with disgust on the small separate parts of this great whole, and murmur, "Where is the grandeur of Man?" We observe one person has feeble intellects ; the next has mean dispositions ; a third is a petty composition of whims and humors ; another the slave of ignorance or prejudice ; the next a trifler ; and that other stained with the black of infamy ; and so onward to an indefinite number. Yet happily, we are sometimes relieved from this dissatisfaction of individual scrutiny, by the appearance of an object which powerfully arrests our attention, and quickly converts it into admiration : an object at once great and indivisible. A character stands before us of colossal stature, who presents the lineaments and the powers of man in magnitude,—a magnitude which conceals a numerous crowd of mankind undistinguished behind him. His aspect declares that he knows he belongs to himself, and that he possesses himself ; while the rest seem only to belong as appendages to the situation. He brings from the Creator a commission far more ample than those of other men ; and instead of having to learn with tedious application, the nature and circumstances of the world to which he is sent, it appears as if he had been taught them all before he came. Guided by intuitive principles and rules, he enters on the stage of action with the intelligent confidence of one who has accomplished himself by frequenting it long. And whatever still undiscovered means and materials are requisite to his achievements, some kind of internal revelation informs him where they are, though latent in earth, water, air, or fire ; and empowers him quickly to detect them and draw them thence. We observe that for many things he has regards and names different from the common ; for some objects generally esteemed great, excite no emotion in him, or none but contempt. He calls suffering, discipline ; sacrifices, emolument ; and what are usually deemed insuperable obstacles, he names impediments, and casts them out of the way, or vaults over them. His mind seems a focus which concentrates into one ardent beam the languid lights and fires of ten thousand surrounding minds. It might be expected that a few such extraordinary specimens of human nature, scattered here and there, would have a wonderful influence on the rest of men. One might expect to see a most fervid emulation kindled wide, indolence and folly discarded, and trifles falling to the ground from all hands. It should seem natural to make the reflection, "Either these are more than men, or we are less." We are disappointed. Let spleen be repressed whenever we survey mankind ; for it can represent everything flat and mean. But when benevolence itself makes the survey in the candid light of truth, it must either philosophize heroically, or pathetically lament ; for, indeed, the intellectual

and moral system is deeply degraded. The imposing proof of it is in this fact, that the grandest human characters make but a very slight impression on many minds, and on very many others none at all. How large a number, for instance, have souls so dark, so hopelessly contracted and dull, so like the clay that encloses them, that they are unable to recognize greatness when displayed before them! Again, it is true that "the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not." Yes, it is a night of mind too thick for these luminaries to irradiate!

Who shall assign the reason? Is it true that the human nature was cast to carry forward the great series of existence, from the inferior to the higher ranks of being, by a gradation which *such* parts were necessary to complete? or is it a solemn decree of fate that the aggregate amount of human dignity *must* not exceed a certain measure, and therefore the splendid intellectual possessions of individuals are of the nature of conquests, made at the expense of part of their brethren, who must be degraded, to counterbalance these glories? As to the very numerous class who hold the degree of mediocrity, tell them of a man who has performed a noble act of justice or benevolence in spite of the most powerful temptations to the contrary; tell them of another who has suffered tortures and death for virtue's sake—and suffered them without a groan; describe to them heroes who have possessed their souls unappalled when environed by dangers, and horrors, and death, and fire; or talk to them of a sublime genius, that transcending Milton's powerful agents, who constructed a road from the infernal kingdom to this unfortunate world, has carried a path from this world among the stars, and generally the emotion kindled would be so languid, that the smallest trifle will extinguish it, and turn attention another way. They are content to acknowledge that such characters are much superior to them; just as they would acknowledge that a tree is taller, and then think no more about them. They resemble some lazy and incurious peasants inhabiting the neighborhood of a high mountain, from the top of which they *have heard* that vast plains, and cities, and ocean, can be seen, but never thought it worth the labor to ascend for such a view.

How pleasing it is to turn from the side of despair to that of hope! This indifference does not reign in every bosom. There are some persons in whose souls the Divinity has mingled a portion of the celestial fire, which, partially oppressed by discordant materials and inauspicious influences, but ever-living, glows and starts and sparkles in restless incessant activity. It is interesting to observe the features of their characters and the movements of their minds. The common stream of life's pleasures tastes insipid, and its trifles cannot amuse them; they sigh spontaneously for something nobler. How deep their astonishment, while they contemplate the spirit and state of society, viewed sometimes as one great concourse, tumultuously busy about vanity, and then resolved, according to character, into the different classes of those who try to quench the ethereal spirit in degraded pleasure; of those who

sacrifice everything that makes a man preferable to a brazen statue, at Mammon's shrine, and would sell the sun and moon, if in their power, for money; and of those light beings that cluster into mirthful groups, where the entrance of wisdom would be regarded like the introduction of a coffin. The reflections that affect, and the ideas that inspire them most, they find they do not possess in common with the numbers that surround them, and the impossibility of reciprocation, therefore, often insulates them from society. An original fountain of an unknown element springing perpetually within, diffuses such a peculiar quality through the character, and causes such uncommon forms of mental vegetation, that the men appear a kind of foreigners, and their sentiments, when disclosed, exotics. They are like trees torn from some remote continent, and drifted to a coast where the natives do not recognize the fruits they carry, and will not taste them. They exult in the consciousness of existence; but this exultation is continually disturbed by secret intimations that existence has a scope and has treasures from the fulness of which they are precluded by imbecility. In simple phrase, they feel as if they possessed not enough of existence, and would occupy a wider space, and act in greater dimensions, among the ranks of intellectual being.

The prime passion of their souls is for mental liberty. They find themselves restricted and confined within limits against which they most zealously rebel; and struggle eagerly to break forth on the infinite field of the universe, where they may expatiate without bound, and attain the amplitude and elevation of thought which they always desire. A sublime image of perfection is constantly before them at a distance, though a gloomy cloud may sometimes interpose, to obscure or for a moment hide it. They are like night adventurers, who, having caught a view of a noble mansion on a difficult eminence, resolve to reach it, while, together with the path that conducts thither, it is alternately revealed by flashes of lightning, and shrouded by the returning darkness. They are grieved almost to madness when they feel their spirits failing in a trial, or find their powers retreating from some noble but arduous attempt. Grand objects in the natural world affect them powerfully, and their images are adopted as a kind of scenery for the interior apartment of the mind, to assist it to form great thoughts. But the interest they feel in greatness when it shines in their brother man, is of force to fire their utmost enthusiasm, at the view of exalted heroism, displayed in enterprise, in suffering, or even in retirement, and to melt them into tears at the recital of an act of godlike generosity. For a while they almost lament that they could not be there, and themselves the actors, though ages have passed since. In the reveries into which they sometimes wander, they are apt to personate some exalted character in some interesting situation; or more frequently to fancy themselves such characters, and create situations of their own; and when they return from visionary roving, to the serious ground of reason, regretting the inertia



of the past, they solemnly resolve the most strenuous exertions to surpass, beyond measure, all around them, and their present selves.

My friends! this ardor must not be extinguished; it expresses your kindred with the objects at which it burns. But it cannot die. An attempt to soothe it into lasting quiescence, and to hide in oblivion the affecting views and images that have cherished it, would be vain. It is destined to accompany the man through life, at his choice to mortify or inspire him; for it is imparted by the Divinity as at once an incitement and a power of noble action, which it will invigorate with its mighty energy; but it will haunt and harass an unmanly repose with incurable restlessness. Restless, too, will be the career to which it prompts; but, like that of the sun, it will be the restlessness of continual progression, and inextinguishable fire. The passion you feel is the love of greatness, and will aid your approximation to that which it loves.

But what is the greatness of man? The distinction of *great* was undoubtedly first applied to things in the natural world, and afterward, through that pleasing and wonderful analogy between the various departments of existence which makes every object the mirror to a corresponding one, it was applied to the remarkable individuals among men. The distinction naturally belonged to objects of uncommon size or force—to effects which prove themselves the result of mighty causes—and to powers which defy all human control; and it was easily extended to those men in whose predominant qualities a certain resemblance of these instances in nature was discovered. And we cannot long contemplate natural sublimity without a glancing of the mind toward human greatness; nor the greatness of man without viewing in fancy the grand visions of nature. The relation has even taken possession of our language; for brilliant, strong, lofty, profound, firm, and twenty similar words, are the epithets which we use, and *must* use, in describing great characters. We may be permitted a slight deviation, within the scope of this analogy, to notice several of the grand objects in the natural world. For instance, we behold a lofty mountain, which has been seen by so many eyes of shepherds, laborers, and fancy's musing children, that will see it no more. While we view the towering majesty and unchangeable sedateness of its cliffs and sides, and the venerable gloom of forty centuries impressed on its brow, imparting a deeper solemnity to the sky, which sometimes darkens the summit with its clouds and thunders, the expression of our feelings is—How sublime! We have taken our stand near a great cataract; the thundering dash, the impetuous rebound, the furious turbulence, and the murky vapor—oh, what a spectacle! sometimes, while we have gazed, the noise and mass of waters seemed to increase every moment, threatening to involve and annihilate us. We could fancy we heard preternatural sounds—the voice of death—through the roar. It seemed as if some hideous breach had taken place of the regular order of the system, and the element were rushing from its natural state into strange combustion, as the commencement of

ruin. It gives a most striking representation of omnipotent vengeance pouring on enormous guilt. We wonder almost that the stream could change the calmness with which it flowed a little while before into such dreadful tumult, and that from such dreadful tumult it could subside into calmness again.

Perhaps we have seen the sea reposing in calmness. Its ample extent and glassy smoothness seeming almost to rival the sky expanded above it; its depth to us unknown; the thought that we stand near a gulf, capable in one hour of extinguishing all human life—and the thought that this vast body, now so peaceful, can move, can act with a force quite equal to its magnitude—inspire a sublime sentiment. Perhaps we have seen it in tempest, moving with a host of mountains to assault the eternal barrier which confines its power. If there were in reality spirits of the deep, it might suit them well to ride on these ridges, or howl in this raging foam. We have often seen the fury of little beings; but how insignificant in comparison of what we now behold, the world in a rage! Indeed, we could almost imagine that the great world is informed with a soul, and that these commotions express the agitations of its passions. Undoubtedly to mariners, hazarded far off in the midst of such a scene, the sublimity is lost in the danger. Horror is the sentiment with which they survey the vast flood, rolling in hideous steeps, and gulfs, and surges; while at a distance, on the gloomy limit of the view, Despair is seen to stand, summoning forward still new billows without end. But, to a spectator on the land, the influence which breathes powerfully from the scene, and which conscious danger would darken into horror, is illuminated into awful sublimity, by the perfect security of his situation.

But the sun far transcends all these objects, and yet mingles no terror with the emotion of sublimity. His grandeur is expressed in that vivid fluctuation, and that profuse effulgence, which, so superior to the faintness of a merely reflective luminary, are the signs of an original, inexhaustible fire. He has the aspect of a potentate, ambitious in universal empire of nothing but the power of universal beneficence; and a stranger to the character of our part of the creation would think that must be a pure and happy world which is blest with so grand a radiance! What a pleasure to see him rise—but partially at first, as with a modest delay, till the smile which his appearance kindles over the world invites him to come forward. A certain demure coldness which a little while before gave every object a coy and solitary air, shutting up even the beauties of every flower from our sight, is changed by his full appearance into a kind of social gaiety, and all things, animate and inanimate, seem to rejoice with us and around us. We view him climbing the clouds that sometimes appear on the horizon in the form of mountains, which he seems to set on fire as he climbs. In his course through the sky, he is sometimes seen shaded with clouds, as if passing under the umbrage of a great forest, and sometimes in the clear expanse, like a vast

fountain of the element of which *minds* are made. From morning till evening he has the dominion of all that is grand and beautiful over the face of nature, and seems at once to make it his own, and to make it ours. His glories are augmented in his decline, as he passes down the sky amid a wilderness of beautiful clouds, the incense of the world, collected to honor him as he retires; till at last he seems to descend into a calm sea with amber shores—leaving, however, above the horizon a mellow lustre, soft and sweet, as the memory of a departed friend. How important and dignified should that course of action be, which is lighted by such a lamp! How magnificent that system which required so great a luminary—and to what a stupendous elevation will that thought rise, which must vault over such an orb of glory, in its way to contemplate a Being still infinitely greater!

When the night is come, we may look up to the sublime tranquillity of the heavens, where the stars are seen, like nightly fires of so many companies of spirits, pursuing their inquiries over the superior realms. We know not how far the reign of disorder extends, but the stars appear to be beyond its limits; and, shining from their remote stations, give us information that the universe is wide enough for us to prosecute the experiment of existence, through thousands of stages, perhaps in far happier climes than this. Science is the rival of imagination here, and by teaching that these stars are suns, has given a new interest to the anticipation of eternity, which can supply such inexhaustible materials of intelligence and wonder. Yet these stars seem to confess that there must be still sublimer regions for the reception of spirits refined beyond the intercourse of all material lights; and even leave us to imagine that the whole material universe itself is only a place where beings are appointed to originate, and to be educated through successive scenes, till passing over its utmost bounds into the immensity beyond, they there at length find themselves in the immediate presence of the Divinity.

---

#### EXTRACTS FROM MR. FOSTER'S JOURNAL.

Many of these passages will serve to illustrate the biography; as they record expressions of personal feeling, incidents, and conversational remarks, relating to the period through which the narrative in this chapter extends.

41. I aspire to be an intellectual painter, and I review nature's scenery so often, to possess myself of colors.

54. I wish a character as decisive as that of a lion or a tiger, and an impetus towards the important objects of my choice as forcible as theirs towards prey and hostility;—wish to have an extensive atmosphere of consciousness; a soul which can mingle with every element in every

form ; which, like an Æolian harp, arrests even the vagrant winds, and makes them music.

120. The equanimity which a few persons preserve through the diversities of prosperous and adverse life, reminds me of certain aquatic plants which spread their tops on the surface of the water, and with wonderful elasticity keep the surface still, if the water swells or if it falls.

123. Adversity ! thou thistle of life, thou too art crowned ; first with a flower, then with down.

205. A man of genius may sometimes suffer a miserable sterility ; but at other times he will feel himself the magician of thought. Luminous ideas will dart from the intellectual firmament, just as if the stars were falling around him ; sometimes he must think by mental moonlight, but sometimes his ideas reflect the solar splendors.

207. Casual thoughts are sometimes of great value. One of these may prove the key to open for us a yet unknown apartment in the palace of truth, or a yet unexplored tract in the paradise of sentiment that environs it.

209. When the majestic form of Truth approaches, it is easier for a disingenuous mind to start aside into a thicket till she is past, and then re-appearing say, " It was not Truth," than to meet her, and bow, and obey.

210. When we withdraw from human intercourse into solitude, we are more peculiarly committed in the presence of the Divinity ; yet some men retire into solitude to devise or perpetrate crimes. This is like a man going to meet and brave a lion in his own gloomy desert, in the very precincts of his dread abode.

212. Time is the greatest of tyrants. As we go on towards age, he *taxes* our health, our limbs, our faculties, our strength, and our features.

213. Youth is not like a new garment, which we can keep fresh and fair by wearing sparingly. Youth, while we have it, we *must* wear daily, and it *will* fast wear away.

214. The retrospect on youth is too often like looking back on what was a fair and promising country ; but is now desolated by an overwhelming torrent, from which we have just escaped.

215. Or it is like visiting the grave of a friend whom we had injured, and are precluded by his death from the possibility of making him an atonement.

218. I am not *observing*, I am only seeing : for the beam of my eye is not charged with *thought*.

235. Characters formed in the routine of a court, like pebbles in a brook, are rounded into a smooth uniformity, in which the points and angles of virtuous singularity are lost.

262. Sweet bird ! it is a tender and entrancing note, as if breathed by the angel of love ; rather the infinite spirit of love inspires thy bosom, and thou art right while thou singest to raise those innocent little eyes to heaven !

263. Large masses of black cloud, following one another like a train of giants, in sullen silence, answering the azure smiles of heaven that gleam between, with a Vulcanian frown.

264. Why was the Jewish dispensation so strange, so exterior, so inadequate? Why? Would that the end of the world were come to explain the proceedings of Providence during its continuance! But I perceive multitudes around me, who know nothing of these doubts and wonderings.

267. I have seen a man, a *religious* man, press his foot down repeatedly on a small ant-hill, while a great number of the poor animals have been busy on it. I never did such a thing, never. Oh Providence! how many poor insects of thine are exposed to be trodden to death in each path: are not *all* beings within thy care?

274. How many of these minds are there to whom scarcely any good can be done? They have no excitability. You are attempting to kindle a fire of stones. You must leave them as you find them, in permanent mediocrity. You waste your time if you do not employ it on materials which you can actually modify, while such can be found. I find that most people are made only for the common uses of life.

278. I do not long for this powerful excitation as an instrument of vain-glory. It is not a thing which, ambition out of the way, would give me no disturbance. No; it is essential to my enjoyment. It is the native impulse of my soul, and it must be gratified, or I shall be either extremely degraded, or extremely unhappy; for I am unhappy in as far as I do not feel myself advancing toward true greatness. I feel myself like a large and powerful engine which has not sufficient water or fire to put it completely in motion.

279. Perhaps you may think that vanity betrays me into a flattering estimate of my capacity; and perhaps it does; but after having speculated on myself so long, I doubt whether speculation will now be able to detect the fallacy. It must be left to experiment.

280. Here I am now, in health, in a field near C——, musing on plans for futurity. What a question it is, "How—when—where—shall I die?"

285. (To the Deity.) Give me all that is necessary to make me, in the greatest practicable degree, happy and useful. I feel myself so remote from thee, thou grand Centre, and so torpid! It is as if those qualities were extinct in my soul which could make it susceptible of thy divine attraction. But oh! thine energy can reach me even here. Attract me, thou great being, within the sphere of thy glorious light; attract me within the view of thy throne; attract me into the full emanation of thy mercies; attract me within the sphere of thy sacred Spirit's most potent influences.

I thank thee for the promise and the prospect of an endless life; I hope to enjoy it amid the "eternal splendors" of thy presence, O Jehovah! I thank thee for this introductory stage, so remarkably separated by that thick-shaded frontier of death, which I see yonder, from the amplitude

of existence. But oh! how shall I occupy the space of this stage, so as most *absolutely* to achieve its capital purpose,—so as to take possession of what in Heaven's judgment is its *utmost value*. Oh do thou seize my existence at its present point, and henceforward guide and model it thyself! Images of excellence, of happiness, of real greatness, often appear to me, and look at me with an aspect inexpressibly ardent and emphatic. Monitors! why do you accuse me? whither would you lead me? Yes, I will follow them, and try what is that scene to which they invite me. Oh my Father! give me thy strength; inspire, conduct, and crown, one of the unworthiest of all thy sons!

286. My life has been a stream spread into listless diffusion, but ere long it must assume a defined channel, and a quickened motion. I wait to see the valley through which it is to flow; will it be gentle, or rugged and tremendous?

291. I have been reading some of Milton's amazing descriptions of spirits, of their manner of life, their powers, their boundless liberty, and the scenes which they inhabit or traverse; and my wonted enthusiasm kindled high. I almost wished for death; and wondered with great admiration what that life, and what those strange regions really are, into which death will turn the spirit free! I cannot wonder, and I can easily pardon, that this intense and sublime curiosity has sometimes demolished the corporeal prison, by flinging it from a precipice, or into the sea. Milton's description of Uriel and the Sun revived the idea which I have before indulged as an imagination of sublime luxury, of committing myself to the liquid element (supposing some part of the sun a liquid fire), of rising on its swells, flashing amidst its surges, darting upwards a thousand leagues on the spiry point of a flame, and then falling again fearless into the fervent ocean. O! what is it to be dead; what is it to shoot into the expansion, and kindle into the ardors of eternity; what is it to associate with resplendent angels!

292. This soul either shall govern this body, or shall quit it.

293. How much I regret to see so generally abandoned to the weeds of vanity that fertile and vigorous space of life, in which *might be planted* the oaks and fruit-trees of enlightened principle and virtuous habit, which growing up, would yield to old age an enjoyment, a glory, and a shade!

297. I hold myself a sacrifice, a victim, consecrated and offered up on the great altar of the kingdom of Christ, as one of the human fruits of his kingdom, offered by him, the great High Priest, to the God of all.

300. All pleasure must be *bought* at the price of pain: the difference between false pleasure and true is just this—for the *true*, the price is paid *before* you enjoy it—for the *false*, *after* you enjoy it.

301. *Ego*. There is a want of *continuity* in your social character. You seem broken into fragments. *H*. Well, I sparkle in fragments. *Ego*. But how much better to shine *whole*, like a mirror?

302. Infidels assume, in subjects which from their magnitude neces-

sarily stretch away into mystery, to pronounce whatever can, or cannot be. They seem to say, "We stand on an eminence sufficient to command a vision of all things; *therefore* whatever we cannot see does not exist."

303. (*Power of bad habit.*) I know from experience that habit can, in direct opposition to *every* conviction of the mind, and but little aided by the elements of temptation (such as present pleasure, &c.), induce a repetition of the most unworthy actions. The mind is weak where it has once given way. It is long before a principle *restored* can become as firm as one that has never been moved. It is as in the case of a *mound* of a reservoir; if this mound has in one place been broken, whatever care has been taken to make the repaired part as strong as possible, the probability is that if it give way again, it will be *in that place*.

304. (Spoken of a remarkable instance of moral insensibility in the approach of death.) "It is an occultation of mind which nothing but death can illuminate."

307. One has sometimes continued in a foolish company, for the sake of maintaining a virtuous hostility in favor of wisdom; as the Jordan is said to force a current quite through the Dead Sea.

308. There is not on earth a more capricious, accommodating, or abused thing than CONSCIENCE. It would be very possible to exhibit a curious classification of consciences in genera and species. What copious matter for speculation among the varieties of—lawyer's conscience—cleric conscience—lay conscience—lord's conscience—peasant's conscience—hermit's conscience—tradesman's conscience—philosopher's conscience—Christian's conscience—conscience of reason—conscience of faith—healthy man's conscience—sick man's conscience—ingenious conscience—simple conscience, &c., &c., &c., &c.

309. (Suggested by that passage, "Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, *striving against sin.*")

There was once an age, when it had been most unfortunate to be a bad man; the good ones were so formidably active and courageous. There were a class of men whose profession was martial benevolence. They lived but for the annihilation of wrongs; to defend innocence; to dwell in tempests, that goodness might dwell in peace; to deliver the oppressed and captives, and to dash the tyrant down. Woe then to the castles of proud wickedness, to magicians, robbers, giants, dragons; for the wandering heroes vowed their destruction. *This famous age is gone!* But in every age it has been deemed honorable to wage war against the mischievous things and mischievous beings that have infested the earth. "Gallant and heroic world," we are inclined to exclaim, while we contemplate the mighty resistance made to invading armies, elements, or plagues; or the spirited persecution that has been carried on against robbers, pirates, monsters, serpents, and wild beasts. Yes, tigers, wolves, hyænas, have been pursued to death. The avenging spirit has hunted the timid thief, and even condescended to crush each poor reptile

that has been deemed offensive. But—"The world of fools," we cry, while we consider that SIN, the hideous parent of all evils, and for ever multiplying her brood of monsters over the world, is quietly, or even *complacently*, allowed here to inhabit and to ravage. Where are the heroes "who resist unto blood, *striving against sin*?" Should we weep or laugh at the foolishness of mankind, childishy spending their indignation and force against petty evils, and maintaining a friendly peace with the fell and mighty principle of Destruction? It is just as if men of professed courage, employed to go and find and destroy a tiger or a crocodile that has spread alarm or havoc, on being asked at their return, "Have you done the deed?" should reply, "We have not indeed destroyed the tiger or crocodile, but yet we have acted heroically; we have achieved something great; we have killed a wasp." Or like men engaged to exterminate a den of murderers, who being asked at their return, "Have you accomplished the vengeance?" should say, "We have not destroyed any of the murderers; we did not deem it worth while to attempt it; but, *we have lamed one of their dogs*."

311. (Said of a narrow-minded religionist.) Mr. T. sees religion not as a *sphere*, but as a *line*; and it is the identical line in which *he* is moving. He is like an African buffalo—sees rightforward, but nothing on the right hand or the left. He would not perceive a legion of angels or of devils at the distance of ten yards on the one side or the other.

312. (Spoken in defence of the theory which assigns *Utility* as the foundation of all moral principles, and justifies, on some extraordinary occasions, the violation of *specific* moral rules, in order to preserve this general object inviolate.)

Behold, on that eminence, the temple of utility,—let us approach and enter. "I see no open, regular road thither." "True, on *this* side there is no regular approach; but we *cannot* gain the other side, and there is a most urgent *reason* for us to come up to the holy edifice. What then? let us *open* for ourselves a way; let us cut through the tangled *fence*; let us sacrifice a beautiful shrub, or even a fruit-tree, to clear ourselves a path, rather than lose for ever an inestimable advantage.

"But granting your principle to be abstractly just, there is this serious objection. The right application of it in cases of real life will depend on delicate conscience and enlightened calculation. It is needless to remark how few of mankind are thus qualified." "It is very true, and whoever may assume this occasional dispensation from the *literal prescriptions* of moral law, it *belongs* exclusively to the men of refined, disinterested virtue and clear thought,—the very men who beyond all others will be anxiously cautious in using the license, and will regret the necessity of using it all. Illustrate by a parallel case. You know two ways to a certain town at a considerable distance; the one is what you call '*the king's high road*'—it is broad, plain, and obvious; no man can lose his way; but this road is rather circuitous, and makes the walk long. The other way is shorter, but it is a very slight, almost unknown



tract; it passes through the intricacies of a solitary forest, and by some very dangerous spots. Two persons inquire of you the way to this town. The first is a child. You instantly direct him to go the plain great road, without so much as intimating that there is any other or shorter way. The other person is a man; a man of sense, with 'his eyes about him;' you say to him, 'I commonly direct travellers to keep the great road, as the most certain and safe, though tedious; but I think *such a man as you* might venture a shorter path. Observe me carefully; having walked such a distance along the side of the hill yonder, you must turn to the right, just by an immensely large oak; then wind through the thick shade, by a path you will perceive if you observe attentively, till you come suddenly to the edge of a great precipice; pass carefully along the edge of it till you descend into a glen; there you will observe an old wooden bridge across a deep water, a little below a cataract, the sound of which will seem to make the bridge tremble as you pass; but it trembles because it is crazy; be careful, therefore, to step softly. You must then pass by the ruins of an abbey, and advance forward over a tract of rough ground till you come, &c., &c., &c., &c.' Thus in morals I mean to assert that in *some rare instances* the path of duty may lie in a more direct line to its grand object, than by the letter of specific laws; but that perhaps only the eminently conscientious and intelligent few are competent to judge *when* this exception takes place, and how to dispose of it properly. 'This is a curious kind of *prerogative* in morals in favor of your illuminis.' I cannot help it. I know that my principle, like every other grand principle, may be perverted to a fatal consequence, yet I cannot relinquish it; for if it should ever happen (and the case *has* happened) that the *letter* of a moral law, owing to some extraordinary concurrence of circumstances, should stand in *evident* opposition to that grand *utility*, for the promotion of which all moral rules were appointed by the supreme Governor, it cannot be a question *which* ought to be sacrificed."

313. Their courtship was carried on in poetry. Alas! many an enamored pair have courted in poetry, and after marriage, *lived in prose*.

314. I know no mortification so severe as that which accompanies the evinced inefficacy, in one's own conduct, of a virtuous conviction so decisive that it can receive no additional cogency from the resources of either the judgment or the heart.

315. We have such an habitual persuasion of the general depravity of human nature, that in falling among strangers we always *reckon on* their being irreligious, till we discover some specific indication of the contrary.

319. After considering the effect which has been produced by the Iliad of Homer, I am compelled to regard it with the same sentiment as I should a knife of beautiful workmanship, which had been the instrument used in murdering an innocent family. Recollect as one instance, its influence on Alexander, and through him on the world.

320. Polished steel will not shine in the dark; no more can *reason*, however refined, shine efficaciously, but as it reflects the light of divine truth—shed from heaven.

321. We are as to the grand system and series of God's government, like a man, who, confined in a dark room, should observe, through a chink of the wall, some large animal passing by;—he sees but an extremely narrow strip of the object at once as it moves by, and is utterly unable to form an idea of the size, proportions, or shape of it.

323. How dangerous to defer those momentous reformations which conscience is solemnly preaching to the heart! If they are neglected, the difficulty and indisposition are increasing every month. The mind is receding, degree after degree, from the warm and hopeful zone; till, at last, it will enter the *arctic* circle, and become fixed in relentless and eternal ice!

323.\* I have sometimes thought, if the *sun* were an *intelligence*, he would be horribly incensed at the world he is appointed to enlighten; such a tale of ages, exhibiting a tiresome repetition of stupidity, follies, and crimes.

324. "Nothing new under the sun." I compare life to a little wilderness, surrounded by a high dead wall. Within this space we muse and walk in quest of the new and the happy, forgetting the insuperable limit, till, with surprise, we find ourselves stopped by the *dead wall*; we turn away, and muse and walk again, till, on another side, we find ourselves close against the *dead wall*. Whichever way we turn—still the same.

326. Exquisitely curious appearance of the moonshine on the rippled surface of a broad river (Thames), like an infinite multitude of little fiery gems moving and sparkling through endless confusion; or like brilliant insects sporting, all intermingled and never tired or reposing, the most vivid frisks. At a great distance the appearance is lost in an indistinct, diffused light; but they are there as busy as they are here. How busy activity can go on in the other regions of the earth, or another part of the town, without knowing or caring whether it is so *here* or not.

328. Regret that interesting ideas and feelings are the *comets* of the mind; they transit off. *Qu.* What mode of making them *fixed stars*, and thus the mind a firmament always resplendent?

330. Argument from *miracles* for the truth of the Christian *doctrines*. Surely it is fair to believe that those who received from heaven superhuman power, received likewise superhuman wisdom. Having rung the *great bell of the universe*, the sermon to follow must be extraordinary.

331. I stoutly maintained in a company lately, that the English are the most barbarous people in the world. I cited a number of prominent facts; among others, that *bull-baiting* was lately defended and sanctioned in the grand talisman of the national humanity and virtue—the Parliament.

349. Met a number of men one after another. My urbanity was not up to the point of saying "Good morning," till I had passed the last of them, who had nothing to attract civility more than the others, except

his being the last. If a Frenchman and an Englishman were shown a dozen persons, and under the necessity of choosing one of them to talk an hour with, the Frenchman would choose the first in the row, and the Englishman the last.

351. Poor horse! to draw both your load and your *driver*: so it is;—those that have power to impose burdens, have power and will to impose their vile selves in addition. En passant, reflections here;—how different is this one fact to me and to the horse I this moment looked at; I think—the horse feels; I am turning a sentence, the horse pants in suffering; how languid a feeling is that of sympathy! Nothing mortifies me more than that defect of the vitality of sympathy, with which I am for ever compelled to tax myself.

353. (Little bird in a tree.) Bird, 'tis pity such a delicious note should be silenced by winter, death, and above all by annihilation. I do not, and I cannot believe that all these little spirits of melody are but the snuff of the grand taper of life, the mere vapor of existence to vanish for ever.

356. Many images are called up in the mind by moral analogies which were not recognized before, i. e. were not noticed with a distinct thought.

364. If a stranger on the road is anxious to have you for a companion. it is commonly a proof that his company is not worth having.

370. How much a traveller's attention is commonly engrossed by the works of art, houses, carriages, &c.; and how little is it directed to the endless varieties of nature.

371. An old stump of an oak, with a few young shoots on its almost bare top. *Analogy*: Youthful follies growing on old age.

372. A still pool amid a most barren heath, shining resplendently in the morning sunshine. *Analogy*: Talents accompanied with moral barrenness, i. e. indolence or depravity.

379. No scheme so mortifying as that which employs large means to accomplish little ends. Let your system be magnitude of end with the utmost economy of means.\*

382. I want to extract and absorb into my soul the sublime mysticism that pervades all nature, but I cannot. I look on all the vast scene as I should on a column sculptured with ancient hieroglyphics, saying, "There is significance there," and despairing to read. At every turn it is as if I met a ghost of solemn, mysterious and undefinable aspect; but while I attempt to arrest it, to ask it the veiled secrets of the world, it vanishes. The world is to me what a beautiful deaf and dumb woman

\* "It (the Bible Society) possesses every characteristic of the work of God, in which the simplest means are made to produce the greatest effects; where there is the utmost economy in the contrivance, and the greatest splendor and magnificence in the design. The imbecility of man appears in the littleness of his ends, which he accomplishes for the most part by complicated and laborious operations. Omnipotence, on the contrary, places opulence in the end and parsimony in the means."—HALL, *Works*, vol. iv., p. 383.

would be ; I can see the fair features, but there is not language to send forth and impart to me the element of soul.

383. Fancy makes vitality where it does not find it ; to it all things are *alite*. On this unfrequented walk even the dry leaf that is stirred by a slight breath of air across the path, seems for a moment to have its little life and its tiny purpose.

384. There is an argumentative way, not only of discussing to ascertain truth, but also of enforcing acknowledged and familiar truth.—Baxter—Law.

385. Let a man compare with each other, and also bring to the abstract scale, the sentiment which follows the performance of a kind action and that which follows a vindictive triumph ; still more if the good was done in return for evil. How much pleasure then will that man ensure, —yes, what a vast share of it ! whose deliberate system it is, *that his every action and speech shall be beneficent !*

392. Most remarkable appearance of a field full of oaks cut down, disbarbed and embrowned by time. Gave me forcibly the idea of an assemblage of giant monsters ; or of the skeletons of a giants' field of battle.

393. Some one spoke of altering and modernizing the style of one of the most eloquent writers of the last century. [F.] "You cannot alter his diction ; it is not an artificial fold which may be taken off, and another superinduced on the mass of his thoughts. His language is identical with his thought ; the thought *lives* through every article of it. If you cut, you wound. His diction is not the clothing of his sentiments, —it is the skin ; and to alter the language would be to flay the sentiments alive."

394. Of all the kinds of writing and discourse, that appears to me incomparably the best, which is distinguished by grand masses, and prominent bulks ; which stand out in magnitude from the tame ground work, and impel the mind by a succession of *separate strong impulses*, rather than a continuity of equable sentiment. One has read and heard very sensible discourses, which resembled a plain, handsome brick wall,—all looks very well, 'tis regularly built, high, &c., but 'tis all alike ; it is flat ; you go on and on, and notice no one part more than another ; each individual brick is nothing, and you pass along, and soon forget utterly the wall itself. Give me, on the contrary, a style of writing and discourse that shall resemble a wall that has the striking irregularity of pilasters, pictures, niches, and statues.

395. Mr. T.'s discourse is good but attenuated : he has a clue of thread of gold in his hand, and he unwinds for you ell after ell ; but give me the man who will throw the clue at me at once, and let me unwind it ; and then show in his hand another ready to follow.

396. There is a great deficiency of what may be called *conclusive* writing and speaking. How seldom we feel at the end of the paragraph or discourse that something is *settled and done !* It lets our habit of think-

ing and feeling *just be as it was*. It rather carries on a parallel to the line of the mind, at a peaceful distance, than fires down a tangent to smite across it. We are not compelled to say with ourselves emphatically, "Yes, it is so! it must be so; that is decided to all eternity!" The subject in question is still left afloat, and you find in your mind no new impulse to action, and no clearer view of the end at which your action should aim. I want the speaker or writer ever and anon, as he ends a series of paragraphs, to *settle* some point irrevocably with a *vigorous knock* of persuasive decision, like an auctioneer, who with a rap of his hammer says, "There! that's yours; I've done with it; now for the next"

397. "I know as well as you the folly of wandering for ever among the *abstractions* of philosophy, while truth's business and ours is with the real world. I am endeavoring to learn truth from observations on facts. I am trying to take off the hide of the actual world, but it must be curried by philosophy, you will grant me, to be made fit for all the useful purposes."

402. How little of our knowledge of mankind is derived from *intentional* accurate observation. Most of it has, unsought, found its way into the mind from the continual presentations of the objects to our unthinking view. It is a knowledge of *sensation* more than of *reflection*. Such knowledge is vague and superficial. There is no *science* of human nature in it. It is rather a habit of feeling than an act of intellect. It perceives obvious, palpable peculiarities; but nice distinctions, delicate shades, are invisible to it. A philosopher will study all men with as accurate observation as he would some individual on whose dispositions, opinions, or whims, he believed his fate to depend.

405. Lanthorn in a dark night—interesting appearance of the tenebrious glimmer it throws on the nearest shrubs and trees; and of the thick darkness that seems to *lurk* and frown close behind.

407. It would be interesting to look back on all the past of one's life, to see how many, and count how many, vivid little points of recollection still twinkle through its shade. My mind just now caught sight of one of these stars of retrospect, at the distance of sixteen or seventeen years. It was my once (in a summer evening, the sun not set) lying on my back on the grass, and holding a small earthen vessel, out of which I had just sipped my evening milk, between my face and the sky, in such a way that a few of the soft rays glanced on my eyes, and seemed to form a little living circle of lustre, round an eyelet hole, through which I fancied visions of entrancing beauty.

408. Burke's sentences are pointed at the end,—instinct with pungent sense to the last syllable. They are like a charioteer's whip, which not only has a long and effective lash, but cracks, and inflicts a still smarter sensation at the *end*. They are like some serpents of which I have heard it vulgarly said, their life is the fiercest in the tail.

410. I have often noticed the process in my mind, when in the outset

of a journey or day, I have set myself to *observe* whatever should fall within my sphere. For some time at first I can do no more than take an account of bare facts ; as, there is a house ; there a man ; there a tree ; such a speech uttered ; such an incident happens, &c., &c. After some time, however, a larger enginery begins to work ; I feel more than a simple perception of objects ; they become environed with an atmosphere, and shed forth an emanation. They come accompanied with trains of images, moral analogies, and a wide diffused, vitalized, and indefinable kind of sentimentalism. Generally, if one can compel the mind to the labor of the first part of the process, the interesting sequel will soon follow. After one has passed a few hours in this element of revelation, which presents this old world like a new vision all around, one is ashamed of so many hundred walks and days which have been vacant of observation and reflection.

416. (Of an extremely depraved child.) "I never saw so much *essence of Devil* put in so small a vessel."

417. How large a portion of the material that books are made of, is destitute of any *peculiar* distinction. "It has," as Pope said of women, just "no character at all." An accumulation of sentences and pages of vulgar truisms and candle-light sense, which any one was competent to write, and which no one is interested in reading, or cares to remember, or could remember if he cared. This is the *common* of literature—of space wide enough, of indifferent production, and open to all. The pages of some authors, on the contrary, give one the idea of enclosed gardens and orchards, and one says, "Ha ! that is the man's own."

418. I have often contended that attachments between friends and lovers cannot be secured strong, and perpetually augmenting, except by the intervention of some interest which is not *personal*, but which is common to them both, and towards which their attentions and passions are directed with still more animation than even towards each other. If the whole attention is to be directed, and the whole sentimentalism of the heart concentrated on each other ; if it is to be an unvaried, "*I towards you, and you towards me,*" as if each were to the other, not an ally or companion joined to pursue happiness, but the very end and object—happiness itself ; if it is the circumstance of reciprocation itself, and not what is reciprocated, that is to supply perennial interest to affection ; if it is to be mind still reflecting back the gaze of mind, and reflecting it again, cherub towards cherub, as on the ark, and no luminary or glory between them to supply beams and warmth to both,—I foresee that the hope will disappoint, the plan will fail. Affection, on these terms, will be reduced to the condition of a famishing animal's stomach, the opposite sides of which, for want of pabulum introduced, meet and digest, and consume each other. Attachment must burn in oxygen, or it will go out ; and, by oxygen, I mean a mutual admiration and pursuit of virtue, improvement, utility, the pleasures of taste, or some other interesting concern, which shall be the element of their commerce, and make them love each

other not only *for* each other, but as devotees to some third object which they both adore. The affections of the soul will feel a dissatisfaction and a recoil if, as they go forth, they are entirely intercepted and stopped by any object that is not *ideal*; they wish rather to be like rays of light glancing on the side of an object, and then sloping and passing away; they wish the power of elongation, through a series of interesting points, on towards infinity.

Reading lately some of Newton's *Letters to his wife*, I wondered at the phenomenon of so warm and long protracted an affection, or rather passion, with so little of this oxygen; no literature, no romancings of fancy, no excursions over the creation, no moral discussions, no character-criticism, no plans of improvement, no analysing of each other's qualities and defects; no, all mere *I and you, you and I*. A measure of piety indeed there is; but without any variety or specific thought.

Human society is a vast circle of beings on a plain, in the midst of which stands the shrine of goodness and happiness, inviting all to approach; now the attached pairs in this circle should not be continually looking on each other, but should turn their faces very often toward this central object, and as they advance, they will, like radii from the circumference to the centre, continually become closer to each other, as they approximate to their mutual and ultimate object.

420. "I still less and less like the wealthy part of your circle (H.'s). It appears to me, that the main body of principle is merged. As to religion, sir, they are in a religious diving-bell; religion is not circumambient, but a little is conveyed down into the worldly depth, where they breathe by a sort of artificial inlet—a tube."

421. Melancholy musings in the direction of fatalism. One seems to see all *how it is to be*, as to one's friends, as to *one's self*. Unfortunate habits have been formed, and threaten to reign till death. Instruction, truth, just reach the heart to fall inefficacious. One augurs the sequel from the first part; as in a common-place novel, one can see from the first chapter what is to happen forward to the close.

422. The importance and necessity of a ruling passion—i. e., some grand object, the view of which kindles all the ardor the soul is capable of, to attain or accomplish it—possibility of *creating* a ruling passion asserted.

423. A reflection that never occurs without the bitterest pain; one longs for affection—for an object to love devotedly,—for an interesting friend to associate and commune with—meanwhile THE DEITY offers his friendship and communion, and is refused, or forgotten!!! There are, too, the sages of all ages—there is Moses, Daniel, Elijah; and you complain of *want of society!!!*

424. The whole system of life goes on this principle of *selling* one's self: then the question of estimates should for ever recur—"my time for *this*?"—"and *this*?"

425. Idea partly serious, partly comic, of formally judging myself,

sentencing, and then hanging myself ; the thousand faults that still attach to me might almost tempt to this.

427. (Ruling passion again.) Necessity of pursuing some grand purpose of existence as a sportsman does a fox—at all hazards, over hill and dale and brook ; through wood and brake, and everything and everywhere, unless it go into the earth, or into the clouds ;—and *here*, too, our moral chase shall follow ; for the *body* shall enter the dust—the *soul* ascend !

428. (Fragment of a letter, never sent.) My dear Sir, I consider each of us as having nearly described a *semicircle* of life since I saw you last, and it is with great pleasure I anticipate the completing of the circle in meeting you again in little more than a week. It would be amusing for each to exhibit memoirs of the incidents and of the course. I was lately considering what would be the effect of a law obliging each person to present, at appointed periods, a history of his life during the interval, to a kind of *morality Court* authorized to investigate, censure, and reward. I was considering how, in that case, I should dispose of, and where I should conceal, a considerable quantity of the materials which ought to be exhibited in *my* history, or, if I *could* not conceal them, in what specious language it would be possible to describe them, so as to obtain the tolerance of this high and venerable court. I concluded that the best expedient would be, to *get myself appointed one of the judges*.

What a delightful thing it would be, to be able honestly at all times to approve one's self entirely ! I have sometimes passed through a series of deep and wondering reflection, beginning from myself, and extending over and around that vast mass of human existence I have been observing ; when at last the thought, that an invisible and omniscient Power is all the while taking all these things that I look at, or hear, or do, into his estimate, expanded as it were in the heavens, an ample counterpart to this world of active character below ;—when this thought has lightened from the sky, it has struck as a thought of alarm ; it has even sometimes appeared with the aspect of a *new* thought, announcing a truth not known, or not felt before. I have finished the reflections by determining, that as there really is an estimate above, co-extending with the advance of life below, a wise man will, to the end of time, associate the thought of that estimate with every act of that life. I hope henceforth to live incessantly under the influence of this thought ; and then I should neither care to be a judge in the court I have supposed, nor be at all afraid to present myself at its bar.

431. Told that Fawcett concluded a charity sermon by saying, " When I look at the objects of this charity, I feel I cannot say too much ; when I look at this assembly, I feel I cannot say too little." On hearing this I exclaimed, " Excellent ! artful ! eloquent !" but question, *Is* that artful, or will it be effectual, the policy of which is so instantaneously seen through ?



434. (In the vestry of Battersea meeting, during evening service.) Most emphatic feeling of my individuality—my insulated existence—except that close and interminable connexion, from the very necessity of existence, with the Deity. To the continent of Human Nature, I am a small *island* near its coast; to the Divine Existence I am a small *peninsula*.

435. How impotent often is the pain of guilt as a stimulant to amendment. Instance myself just now, in regard to letters I ought to have written long ago.

436. My efforts to enter into possession of the vast world of moral and metaphysical truth, are like those of a mouse attempting to gnaw through the door of a granary.

439. Threw (in a journey between Bristol and Cheddar) some large stones down a deep old pit, with apparently a great depth of water at the bottom, a dark, sullen glimmer of which the eye occasionally caught. I felt almost a shuddering sensation at the gloomy and furious sound of the water, in the impetuous commotion caused by these stones. Strongly imagined how it would be for *myself* to fall down.

440. Entered a large cavern, sloping down very steep, where a great number of human bones have been found. Saw a considerable quantity of them myself. This cavern was itself but lately found. It was broken into by digging away the rock. No conjecture how or when these bones came there.

445. From what principle in human nature is it that if a child is inclined to cry—I do not mean a very young child—one of the readiest methods of prevention is to affect to whimper yourself?

447. Mr. H. and I looked a considerable time with much curiosity and gratification in one of the irregularly cut pendant glasses of a lustre in which we saw the same beautiful display of colored tints and brilliancies as in the prism, only more irregular and variegated. It was not the glass toy we for a moment thought about, but the strange and beautiful vision, and those laws of nature that could produce it. A young lady present, of polished and expensive education, large fortune, and fond of personal and furniture ornaments, expressed sincerely her wonder at our childish fancy in finding anything to please us in such an object; and said she would reserve the first thing of this kind she should meet with, if no other children claimed it, for one of us. I did not fail to observe the circumstance, as supplying another instance, in addition to the ten thousand one has met with before, of persons who *never saw* the world around them, who are strangers to all its witcheries of beauty, and who, at the same time, indulge a ridiculous passion for the petty productions of art subserving vanity.

448. "How gloomy that range of lamps looks (at some distance along the border of a common)—how dark it is all around them." Yes, like the lights that are disclosed to us from the other world, which simply tell us, that there in the solemn distance, where they burn encircled with darkness, that world is, but shed no light on the region.

449. Interesting conversation with Mr. S. on education. Astonishment and grief at the folly, especially in times like the present, of those parents who totally forget, in the formation of their children's habits, to inspire that vigorous independence which acknowledges the smallest possible number of wants, and so avoids or triumphs over the negation of a thousand indulgences, by always having been taught and accustomed to do without them. "How many things," said Socrates, "I do not want."

450. How precious a thing is youthful *energy*; if only it could be preserved entirely *englobed* as it were within the bosom of the young adventurer, till he can come and offer it forth a sacred emanation in yonder temple of truth and virtue; but, alas! all along as he goes toward it, he advances through an avenue, formed by a long line of tempters and demons on each side, all prompt to touch him with their conductors, and draw this divine electric element, with which he is charged, away!

451. *Children's ball*,—a detestable vanity. Mamma solicitously busy for several weeks previously, with all the assistance too of milliners and *tasteful* friends, with lengthened dissertations, for the sole purpose of equipping two or three children to appear in one of these miserable exhibitions. The whole business seems a contrivance, expressly intended to concentrate to a focus of preternatural heat and stimulus every vanity and frivolity of the time, in order to blast for ever the simplicity of the little souls, and kindle their vain propensities into a thousand times the force that mere nature could ever have supplied.

453. Sesostris, Semiramis, Ninus, &c. These mighty names remain now only as small points, emerging a little above that ocean under which all their actions are buried. We can just descry, by the dying glimmer of ancient history, that that ocean is of *blood*!

454. In books one takes up occasionally, one finds a consolation for the impossibility of reading many books, by seeing how many might have been spared. How little that is new or striking in the great department of religion, morals, and sentiment! Might not all the sermon-books, for instance, in the English language, after the exception of three or four dozen volumes, be committed to the fire without any cause of regret?

455. Few have been sufficiently sensible of the importance of that economy in reading which selects, *almost exclusively*, the *very first* order of books. Why should a man, except for some *special* reason, read a very inferior book, at the very time that he might be reading one of the highest order?

456. *Desideratum*. A comprehensive estimate of the real effect produced by *preaching*.

459. Very advantageous exercise to incite attentive observation and sharpen the discriminating faculty, to compel one's self to sketch the character of each person one knows.

460. What *given force* beyond, for instance, what *my* mind can infuse into argument, illustration, and persuasion, would be requisite to make

religious sentiments impinge so powerfully on the mind of S——, as to *stick fast* on it; or convictions respecting the subject of amusements on the minds of B—— and W——? There is a degree somewhere in the scale, I suppose, that would; but probably that degree would be a strain of eloquence impossible to less than an angel.

464. Struck, in two instances, with the immense importance, to a man of sense, of obtaining a *conversational predominance*, in order to be of any use in any company exceeding the smallest number. Example, *W. Friend*.

465. An opponent maintained that I ought to contribute to the execution of every law of the state I live in, even though I disapprove some of those laws in my private judgment. Denied. How can such obligation come? It is confessed, in the first instance, that in general my own judgment and conscience form the supreme law. Then, if *one* man assumes to interfere with the dictates of my own mind, and enjoins me a course of action opposite to my convictions, I spurn the assumption. But so I do likewise if *two* men thus dictate in opposition to my moral sense. If *three* men do this, I do still the same. If five hundred, if a thousand, if ten thousand, I still do the same, and deem that duty binds me to do so. I ask these, What is this thing you call a *state*? what is that moral authority assumed by it over my conscience, if it merely consists of these same men whom individually, and in the accumulation of an indefinite number, I have already refused to obey?

468. Zealously asserted the rational soul, and future existence of brutes. Their souls made of the worse end of the celestial manufacture of mind, which was not quite fine enough to make into men. Various strong facts cited to prove that they, at least some of them, possess what we strictly mean by mind, reason, &c.

471. All political institutions will probably, from whatever cause, tend to become worse by time. If a system were now formed, that should meet all the philosopher's and the philanthropist's wishes, it would still have the same *tendency*; only I do hope that henceforward to the end of time, men's minds will be intensely awake to the nature and operation of their institutions; so that after a new era shall commence, governments shall not slide into depravity without being keenly watched, nor be watched without the sense and spirit to arrest their deterioration.

472. It is a most amazing thing that young people never consider they shall grow old. I would, to young women especially, renew the monition of this anticipation every hour of every day. I wish we could make all the cryers, watchmen, ballad-singers, and even parrots, repeat to them continually, "You will be an old woman—you will—" "and you."—Then, if they have left themselves to depend, almost entirely, as most of them do, on exterior and casual accommodations, they will be wretchedly neglected. No beaux will then draw a chair close to them, and sweetly simper, and whisper that the bowers of paradise did not afford so delightful a place.

474. "Paid the debt of nature." No; it is not paying a debt—it is rather like bringing a note to a bank to obtain solid gold in exchange for it. In this case you bring this cumbrous body, which is nothing worth, and which you could not wish to retain long; you lay it down, and receive for it from the eternal treasures—liberty, victory, knowledge, rapture.

477. Against amusements, defended on the plea of necessary relaxation. I maintain that excitement is excitability too. An animated, affecting interest, supplies to the mind more than it consumes. The further a man advances in the arder that belongs to a noble employment and object, the more mightily he lives. Other men will perhaps advance with him to a certain point, and there they stop—he goes on; now the *ratio* of his progress and his animation is comparably greater on that far-advanced ground beyond where they left him, than within an equal space in the earlier part of the course. The mind inspired with this enthusiasm asserts its grandeur. It expands toward eternity, anticipative of its destiny. It lives, as Alonzo says, not by the vulgar calculation of months and years, but along the progression of sublime attainment, and amid the flames of an ardor which whirls it like a comet towards the sun.

Would you be a stranger to this energy of soul—or, feeling it, would you prostitute it to seek a poor factitious interest in systematic trifling?

479. Theology and philosophy have been entirely separated by most divines, and some have attempted an awkward association of them; they joined them without producing unity or union. All the emanations of both ought to converge to one focus; and thence, combined and identified, dart forward, a living beam of light, *in infinitum*.

485. The very intelligent Mr. G. reasoned against the Calvinistic doctrine of original depravity,—evidently, I perceived, from his feeling respecting that of eternal punishments. Believing this last, he was anxious, as a kind of palliation of its severity, to make man as *accountable* a being as possible, by making his vice entirely optional, and so making all his depravity his crime.

487. In a conversation one of the speakers expressed his wish (and illustrated his idea by a very ingenious comparison, of a West-India merchant importing a small number of yams sometimes as a slight item of his cargo), a wish that the friends of religion, sinking the importance of the little nominal specific distinctions of Baptist, Presbyterian, Independent, &c., which have caused so much demarcation and warfare, should transfer the emphasis on the grand *generic* term and character—CHRISTIAN, and cease to cite or allude to, or meet one another, but under this distinction. *Ego*. "Sir, this cannot be done while there is so little of the vital element of religion in the world; because *it* is so shallow, these inconsiderable points stand so prominent above the surface, and occasion obstruction and mischief; when the powerful spring-tide of piety and mind shall rise, these points will be swallowed up and disappear."

488. In conversation at W—'s, had a splendid revel of imagination among the stars, caused by the mention of Herschel's telescope, and some astronomical facts asserted by him. The images, like Lee's poetry, were, from a basis of excellence, flung away into extravagance. But it is a striking reflection, that when the wild dream of imagination is past, the *thing is still real*; there is a sun; there are stars and systems; innumerable worlds, on which the soberest depositions of science far transcend all the visions that fancy can open to enthusiasm!

490. What is that sentiment approaching to a sad pleasure, which a mind of profound reflection sometimes feels in a far inward incommunicable grief, though the fixed expectation of calamity, or even guilt, were its cause?

491. How thoughtless often is a moralist's or a preacher's enumeration of what a firm or pious mind may bear with patience, or even complacency; as disease, pain, reduction of fortune, loss of friends, calumny, &c., for he can easily add *words*;—alas! how oppressive is the steady *anticipation* only of any one of these evils!

493. One object of life should be to accumulate a great number of grand questions to be asked and resolved in eternity. We now ask the sage, the genius, the philosopher, the divine,—none can tell; but we will open our series to *other respondents*,—we will ask angels—God.

494. How every hostile feeling becomes mitigated into something like kindness, when its object perhaps lately proud, assuming, unjust, is now seen oppressed into dejection by calamity. The most cruel wild beast, or more cruel man, if seen languishing in death, and raising toward us a feeble and supplicating look, would certainly move our pity. How is this? perhaps the character is not even supposed to be really changed amid the suffering that *modifies* its expression. Do we unconsciously take anything like a *tender feeling*, even for *self*, as a proof of some little goodness, or possibility of goodness? Is it for those beings alone that we feel nothing, who discover a hard and stupid indifference to self, and everything besides? Perhaps any sentient being, the worst existent or possible, *might be* in a situation to move and to justify our sympathy. What then shall we think of that theology which represents the men whom God has made most like himself, as exulting for ever and ever in the most dreadful sufferings of the larger part of those who have been their fellow-inhabitants of this world?

495. One should think that a tender friendship might become more intimate and entire the older the parties grew; as two trees planted near each other, the higher they grow and the more widely they spread,—intermingle more completely their branches and their foliage. (N. B. This was absolutely my *own* conception; but I found the very same idea lately in Ramsay's Gentle Shepherd.\*)

\* But we'll grow auld together, an' ne'er find  
The loss o' youth, when love grows on the mind.

496. (On the question of the equality of men and women.) A lady, in answer to my very serious reasoning to prove that, if naturally equal, nothing can bring the woman to an actual equality, but the same course of vigorous mental exertion which professional men are obliged to go through, said, "Well, we shall be content to occupy a lower ground of intellectual character and attainment." I replied, "You may then be consoled; we from that more elevated region shall sometimes, in the intervals of our *grand* interests and adventures, look down complacently and converse with you, till the emphasis of some momentous subject return, and call us to transact *with our equals*. It will be ours to inhabit the paradise on the high summit of that mount which you will never climb; we shall eat habitually the fruit of the trees of knowledge, but we will kindly sometimes throw you a few apples down the declivity."

497. I am going to wade the stream of misery, and I see an inaccessible bank before me on the other side; *where* I may find it accessible I do not yet know!

498. Strong imagination of sitting or lying awake in a solitary room, and a ghost entering and sitting down in the room opposite me. What an intense feeling it would be while I reciprocated the fixed silent glare.

500. (Fragment of a letter never sent, to a young woman.) "There is one question, my friend, to which you cannot be indifferent, Are you happy? I contemplate many mournful scenes; I converse with many gloomy ideas; I behold many miserable persons; and the impression of such objects makes me sometimes ask, Is any one truly happy? Is there such a blest mortal in the world? Show me that person. Tell me now, do I see that person when I see *you*? Do I indeed? Let me be assured of that, and I would see you often. I would look at you with fixed attention. 'Happiness?' I would say to myself, and continue to regard you, 'What are its signs? Does it sparkle through her eyes? Does it play in her smiles? Does it breathe music in her words?' Rather perhaps I ought to ask, 'What kind of sentiments does she express? What kind of actions does she perform?' Yes, I would observe you with more patience than an astronomer observes the moon. With sincere curiosity I would inquire of you, *the art of being happy*; for the happy are generous, one should think. The person who would not communicate such an art, certainly does not possess it. I would call you 'the Happy Girl,' you would scarcely need any other name; this would be a sufficient distinction, for who could claim it besides? But do you know yourself by this name? It is time to recollect that

See you twa elms that grow up side by side—  
 Suppose them some years syne bridegroom an' bride;  
 Nearer an' nearer ilka year they've prest,  
 Till wide their spreading branches are increas'd,  
 An' in their mixture now are fully blest.  
 This shields the other frae the eastlin blast;  
 That in return defends it frae the wast.

GENTLE SHEPHERD.—Act I., Scene 2.

perhaps the person I am fancying to myself is not really *you* ; perhaps you are *not* happy. That were melancholy. *You* unhappy ? From what cause ? Are you *guilty* ? Oh ! if you have blighted the sweet lily of innocence with folly or crime, you have then some reason to be sad. But are not you pure ? Have you not always avoided, with watchful aversion, everything that could stain your heart or your character ? Cannot you reflect on each season of your life, and on each situation in which the Witness of all things has seen you, without a blush ? Can you not ? Are not the records of memory so fair, that you could with pleasure unfold them to a virtuous friend ? Is there any part on which conscience has fixed a *black seal* ? And are not your *present* principles, feelings, and designs, such as you might with honor avow ?”

501. I doubt if S. is not *too innocent* to become sublimely excellent ; her heart is purity and kindness ; her recollections are complacent ; her wishes and intentions are all good. In such a mind conscience becomes effeminate for want of hard exercise. She is exempted from those revulsions of the heart, that remorse, those self-indignant regrets, those impetuous convictions, which sometimes assist to scourge the mind away from its stationary habits into such a region of daring and arduous virtue, as it would never have reached, nor even thought of, but for this mighty impulse of pain. Witness Albany in Cecilia. Vehement emotion, mortifying contrast, shuddering alarm, sting the mind into an exertion of power it was unconscious of before, and urge it on with restless velocity toward the attainment of that moral eminence, short of which it would equally scorn and *dread* to repose. We fly from pain or terror more eagerly than we pursue good ;—but if both these causes aid our advance !

A young eagle perhaps would never have quitted the warm luxury of its nest, and towered into the sky, if the parent had not pushed it, or the tempest flung it, off, and thus compelled it to fly by the danger of perishing. Is it not too possible that S. may repose complacently in the innocent softness of her nest, and die without ever having unfolded the wing of sublime adventure. At sight of such a death one would weep with tenderness, not glow with admiration ; it is a charming woman that falls, not a radiant angel that rises. (I feel this is cumbrous and obscure, but there is truth in what I mean, that the consciousness of no ill precludes, in some degree, the conception of eminent good ; it feels too safe, it produces a habit far too quiescent ; the noblest purposes can never be either conceived or executed but in a state of ardent excitement, and the painful emotions of conscience are among the most powerful causes of such excitement.)

503. What an astonishing mass of *pabulum* is consumed to sustain an individual human being ! How much nourishment I have consumed by eating and drinking ; how much air by breathing ; how much of the element of affection my *heart* has claimed, and has sometimes lived in luxury, and sometimes starved ! Above all ! what an infinite sum of

those instructions which are to feed the moral and intellectual man, have I consumed, and how poor the consequence! What a despicable, dwarfish growth I exhibit to myself and to God at this hour!

Yes, how much it takes in this last respect, to grow how little! Millions of valuable thoughts I suppose have passed through my mind. How often my conscience has admonished me! How many thousands of pious resolutions! How all nature has preached to me! How day and night, and solitude and the social scenes, and books and the bible, the gravity of sermons and the flippancy of fools, life and death, the ancient world and the modern, sea and land, and the omnipresent God! have all concurred to instruct me! and behold the miserable result of all!! I wonder if the measure of effect be a ten thousandth part of the bulk, to call it so, of this vast combination of causes. How far is this strange proportion between moral effects and their causes necessary in *simple* nature (analogically with the proportion between cause and consequence in *physical pabulum*), and how far is it the indication and the consequence of nature being *depraved*? However this may be, the enormous fact of the inefficacy of truth shades with melancholy darkness to my view, all the hopes for myself and for others, of any grand improvements in this world!

505. Curious process of kindling the passion,—fear, in one's own breast, but the voluntary imagination of approaching ghosts, of the sound of murders, &c., &c. I sometimes do this to escape from apathy.

506. —'s memory is nothing but a row of hooks to hang up grudges on.

507. One of the strongest characteristics of Genius is—the *power of lighting its own fire*.

508. A man of ability, for the chief of his reading, should select such works as he feels beyond his own power to have produced. What can other books do for him but waste his time and augment his vanity?

511. What a number of little captious feelings, mortifications, and even whims, are incident to a devoted affection. My friendship for ——— is attended with a painful watchfulness and susceptibility; my heart suffers a feverish alternation of cold and warmth; physically and literally sometimes a chill sensation pervades my bosom, and moves me at once to be irritated and weep. . . . *Qu.* How far a continual state of feeling like this would be propitious to happiness and to virtue? Yet how is a son of fancy and passion to content himself with that mere *good-liking*, which is exempt from all these pains, because it leaves the most *Elysian* powers of the heart to sleep unmolested to the end of time? It seems tolerably evident, that such *over-vitalized* feelings are unfit for this world, and yet without them there can be none of that sublimity and ecstasy of the affections, which we deem so congenial to the felicities of a superior world.

512. I asserted the strength of Burke's mind equal to that of Johnson's; Johnson's strength is more conspicuous because it is barer. A



very accomplished lady said, "Johnson's sense seems to me much clearer, much more entirely disclosed." "Madam, it is the difference of two walks in a pleasure-ground, both equally good, and broad, and extended ; but the one lies before you plain and distinct, because it is not beset with the flowers and lilacs which fringe and embower the other. I am inclined to prefer the latter."

514. (Fragment of a letter, never sent, to a friend.) "In a lonely large apartment I write by a glimmering taper, too feeble to dispel the spectres which imagination describes, flitting or hovering in the twilight of the remote corners. The winds howl without, and at intervals I hear a distant bell, tolling amidst antiquity and graves. The place and the hour might suit well for an appointed interview with a ghost, coming to reveal, though obscurely, "the secrets of the world unknown." I almost fancy I perceive his approach ; a certain trembling consciousness seems to breathe through the air ; an indistinct sullen sound, like the tread of unseen footsteps, passes along the ground, and seems to come toward me ; I fearfully look up—and behold !—Thus abruptly last night I stopped, not without reason surely."

515. Some ladies, to whose conversation I had been listening, were to take away an epic poem to read. "Why should *you* read an epic poem?" I said to myself ; "you might as well save yourselves the trouble." How often I have been struck at observing, that *no effect at all* is produced, by the noblest works of genius, on the *habits* of thought, sentiment, and talk, of the generality of readers ; their mental tone becomes no deeper, no mellowed ; they are not equal to a fiddle, which improves by being repeatedly played upon. I should not expect one in twenty, of even educated readers, so much as to *recollect* one singularly sublime, and by far the noblest part, of the poem in question : so little emotion does anything awake, even in the moment of reading ; if it did, they would not forget it so soon.

517. How is it possible the conversation of *that pair* can be interesting ? Surely the great principle of continued interest in such a connexion cannot be to talk always in the style of simple, direct personality, but to introduce *personality* into the *subject* ;—to talk of topics so as to *involve each other's feelings*, without perpetually talking *directly at each other*.

520. Most interesting idea, that of renovated being. I am not the person I was, the past is nothing to me ; the past *I* is not the present *I* ; I have transited into another person ; I am my own phoenix.

524. Indisposition of mankind to think ; souls make the world a vast dormitory. The heaven-appointed destiny under which they are placed, seems to protect them from reflection ; there is an *opium sky* stretched over all the world, which continually rains soporifics.

525. Long-maintained question in conversation, how far powerful imagination does always, or necessarily, imply powerful judgment too. Instances, Burns, Bloomfield, &c.

526. Interesting disquisition on the value of continuous passion, habitual emotion, and whether this can be created, and how long a person so feeling could live. Buonaparte cannot live long.

527. Stood in a solitary grove, just opposite to a large cascade, on which I looked with long and fixed attention. Most interesting to observe the movements of my own mind, particularly as to the ideas which come from distant (unseen) objects and scenes. The images of several favorite persons, but particularly *one*, came around me with an aspect inconceivably delicious. Tried to ascertain how much of this charm was added to these images by the influence of the beautiful scene where they appeared to me.

528. Stroke of description of ——'s manners, when in the most advantageous form. "He is neither vulgar nor genteel, nor any compound of these *two kinds of vulgarity*. He has the manners of *no class*, but something of a quite different order. His manners are a part of *his soul*, like the style of a writer of genius. His manners belong to the *individual*. He makes you think neither of clown nor gentleman,—but of *MAN*."

532. Infinite and incalculable caprices of feeling. A quarter of an hour since how romantic, how enchanted with the favorite idea, how anticipative of pleasure from an expected meeting! I have advanced within two hundred yards of the place: well, while I have been looking at some trees and a pool of water, the current of sentiment is changed, and I feel as if I could wish to slink away into deep and eternal solitude.

533. (Right traces, meant to have been pursued much further, of a remarkable female. . . .) She has the pride of sense, yet throws the *onus* of sensible social intercourse on *you*; not taking any sort of responsibility on herself as to the value, animation, or interesting style of conversation; she is silent. Yet if *you* did thus, would describe you to a third person as intolerably dull.

Her judgment makes a difference as to the mental qualities of those she associates with, which her affections do not make. She does not become at all attached to what she respects. . . . She has a much greater tendency to feel and express disgust than liking; contempt, than admiration. She rarely expresses, or seems to feel, admiration of any thing or character, but on a thousand occasions discovers her aversions.

She has a fixed dislike to what may be called affectionatenesses in friendly intercourse; repels the tendency, in a person who is partial to her, toward any personalities of affection; devoutly worships Indifference, and is proud of the religion.

If she speaks on a subject you have suggested, or even in reply to your observation, she directs her discourse to a third person, not to you; as if she would say, "I choose to take some notice of the *subject*, but not the *smallest* notice of *you*."

534. Importance of having a *system* of exercising the affections, friendship, marriage, philanthropy, theopathy. If not in some of these ways exercised, affections become stunted, soured, self-directed.—Old maids.

536. (Amazing caprices of feeling, vide No. 532.) . . . Relapsed into the solitaire feeling; must be a *monad*. A trivial circumstance brought up the feeling that thus changed the current of the heart. That feeling was not of either altered opinions or diminished affection, but a self-originating, sad, and *retiring* sentiment, which seemed to say, "No heart will receive me, no heart needs me."

537. Have I so much originality as I suppose myself to have? The question rises from the reflection that very few original plans of action or enterprise ever occurred to my thoughts.

(Two or three memoranda, transcribed from a paper written at Chichester.)

Important points ascertained:—

(1.) In my present circumstances taken as they are, setting all the past aside, *some one thing is absolutely the best thing I can design or do*.

(2.) My present sphere and course of action is most certainly *not* the best that can be. In proof of this assertion several conclusive reasons can be alleged.

(3.) It strictly follows that to change this sphere and this course, is decisively a part of my duty.

(4.) And inasmuch as life is valuable, and utility is its value, it is clear that the case is urgent, and that I am required to attempt this change with zeal and with speed.

(5.) *The greatest good* is to be my sovereign principle and object of action.

(6.) Incidental principle. To make the plans I adopt for the improvement of my own mind, contribute equally, if possible, to the improvement of others (by writing, letters,—and otherwise).

(7.) *Is not this world a proper scene for a benevolent and ardent mind?* There are bodies to heal, minds to enlighten and reform, social institutions to change, children to educate. *In all this is there nothing that I can do?!!*

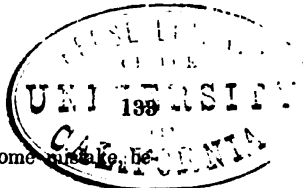
(8.) One of these two things, viz., congenial society, and a sphere of urgency and action, seem absolutely necessary to save my energies from torpor or extinction. If I could gain both!

(9.) Oh, how I reprobate this indecision as to what character I will assume, and what designs I will attempt!

(10.) I deem myself a man of capacity beyond the common; my plan of action ought therefore to include as little as possible of that which common capacity can perform as well as mine; and as much as possible of what requires, and will educe, this superiority of ability which I attribute to myself.

(11.) I want to extend, as it were, and augment my being and its interests; there is *one* mean of doing this, which, &c.

538. One limitation to the noble indifference to what people think and say of us. Every generous mind will regret those misapprehensions of its conduct, which occasion mortification to the person who misappre-



bends—as that a person you respect should, through some mistake, believe that you have ridiculed or injured him.

548. (548—569 written during a walk of a few miles alone.) This glaring, steady sunshine gives an indistinct sameness to all objects, very like a frequent state of my mind, distended in a fixed, general, vacant stare, incapable of individualizing. Hughes described it very correctly once, after hearing me perform a mental exercise while my mind was in this state: “All luminous, but no light.” It is possible to go on in this case, with a train of diction which may sound well enough, and even look *fine*, while it conveys no definite conceptions.

547. Saw a most beautiful butterfly, which I was half inclined to chase. *Qu.* Which would be the stronger excitement to such pursuit, the curiosity raised by seeing such an object for the first time, or the feeling which, as now, is a relic of the interests and amusements of early youth?

549. The feeling which accompanies the recognition of an object that is not in itself interesting, but where the interest is in the circumstance of recognition. I have a feeling of this kind in seeing what I believe to be the same butterfly again at a considerable distance from where I saw it before.

559. Mortified to see a crow fly across my road and away. Man here, proud man, is trudging at this slow and toilsome rate, but how much prouder and more mischievous I should be if I could fly. It was requisite for power of one kind to be checked by impotence of another. I cannot fly.

560. Sheep crowding for shade round an old leafless stump. It cannot shade them now. Analogy: a man fallen from his prosperity and power cannot patronize now. None will seek him now but the *simple*.

562. Blackthorn shows its blossoms before its leaves. Analogy: sensibilities developed before reason is sufficiently expanded to protect them.

564. After looking a good while on the glaring side of the view, my eye does not nicely distinguish these modest beauties in the shade. Analogy: a man whose feelings and habits are formed in splendid and fashionable life, has no relish for the charms of retirement, or of secluded, affectionate society.

569. How much one wishes it possible to leave each painful feeling that accompanies one in the rock, or the tree, or the tomb that one passes; but no: tenaciously faithful, it is found to accompany still! I am gone on, past fields, and woods, and towns, and streams, but there is a spectre here still following me!

588. “Well, but this qualification might be attained, *if* a man would exert sufficient application.” “Ah, Madam, the field of possibility is so beset round with a hedge of thorny *ifs*.”

589. — has one power beyond all you preachers I have yet heard,—a power of massy fragments of originality, like pieces of rock tumbling suddenly down, and dashing into a gulf of water below.

590. (Touch of description of a young woman in the lower ranks, not cultivated into a girl of sense, yet not so thoughtlessly vacant as the common vulgar.) "She has *notions*."

592. The dictates of genius urging elevated principles are not admitted or understood by the generality. So I remember a man refusing a shilling quite new from the mint, every line and point of it distinct and brilliant, for "it was an *odd* kind of shilling, not like other shillings," it must therefore be a bad or suspicious one.

596. Query, whether the generality of minds, the common order, could be cultivated into accuracy and discrimination of *general thought*. No; they might be made accurate in a particular department, depending on facts,—accurate mechanics, tradesmen, grammarians, &c.,—but not as thinkers on the wide general field of truth and sentiment. "This is very unfortunate." "No, madam, all is appointed by the Deity, and if more geniuses had been needful, they would have been forthcoming."

597. You plead that dancing, &c., are things of pleasant *sensation*. Yes, you are right; it does not reach *sentiment*. The line that divides the regions of sensation and sentiment is a very important one:—is not *dignity* all on the *other side* of this line, i. e., the region of sentiment.

600. Confront improper conduct, not by *retaliation*, but *example*.

602. (Said of a lady who infamously spoilt her son,—a most perverse child.) "She will have her reward; she cultivates a night-shade, and is destined to eat its poisoned berries."

605. (Remark on the character of Green.) There is such a predominant habit of deep feeling in his mind, that the smallest touch, a single sentence, will instantly bring his mind and his very voice into that tone. Comparing him to a musical stringed instrument I should say, that he never needed *tuning*; the strings are perfectly ready at any moment; you have only to touch them and they will sound harmoniously the genuine music of sentiment.

606. A character should retain always the upright vigor of manliness; not let itself be bent and fixed in any specific form. It should be like an upright elastic tree, which bends, accommodating a little to each wind on every side, but never loses its spring and self-dependent vigor.

608. A lady said she remembered a remarkable and romantic hill much more distinctly now at the distance of a considerable number of years, from the impression made by a thunder storm which happened when she was on the summit of this hill. I observed how advantageous it is to connect, if we could, some striking association with every idea or scene we wish to remember with permanent interest. This is like framing and glazing the mental picture, and will preserve it an indefinite length of time.

609. Astonishing fact, that all that mankind acknowledge the greatest, they care about the least;—as first, on the summit of all greatness, the Deity. 'Tis acknowledged he reigns over all, is present always *here*, prevails in each atom and each star, observes us as an awful Judge,

claims infinite regard, is supremely good—what then? why, think nothing at all about him!

There is Eternity; you have lived perhaps thirty years; you are by no means entitled to expect so much more life; you at the utmost will very soon, *very soon* die! What follows? Eternity! a boundless region; inextinguishable life; myriads of mighty and strange spirits; vision of God; glories, horrors. Well—what then? Why, think nothing at all about it!

There is the great affair—moral and religious improvement. What is the true business of life? To grow wiser, more pious, more benevolent, more ardent, more elevated in every noble purpose and action, to resemble the Divinity! It is acknowledged; who denies or doubts it? What then? Why, care nothing at all about it! Sacrifice to trifles the energies of the heart, and the short and fleeting time allotted for divine attainments! Such is the actual course of the world. What a thing is mankind!

610. (Feature of the character of one of my friends.) “Vigilant without suspicion, and discriminating without fastidiousness.”

611. (Character of one of my acquaintance, whom a friend was describing as melancholy.) “No; her feelings are rather *fretted* than melancholy.”

612. Astonishing number of analogies with *moral* truth, strike one’s imagination in wandering and musing through the scenes of nature. Or, is analogy a really existing fact, or merely an illusive creation of the mind within itself? Suggested in a moonlight walk, by observing a great rock reflected downward as far as its height upward, in a still piece of water at its foot, and by comparing this deception to that delusive magic of imagination which magnifies into double its proper dimensions of importance an object which is interesting.

613. Sat a little while with a fascinating woman, in a room which looked out on a beautiful rural and vernal scene, while the rays of the setting sun shone in with a mellow softness that cannot be described, after spreading a very peculiar light over the grass, and being partially intercepted by some blooming orchard trees, so as to throw on the walls of this room a most magical picture; every moment moving and changing, and finally melting away. I compared this room in this state, contrasted with an ordinary room in an ordinary state, to the interior of a common mind, contrasted with the interior of a mind of genius. Conversation on the feelings and value of genius. Shall never forget *this* hour.

614. In the moment of uncontrolled fancy and feeling, one attributes perceptions like one’s own to even inanimate objects; for instance, that solitary tree appears to me as if regretting its desolate, individual state.

615. One wonders in how many respects a real resemblance exists through the creation. One may doubt whether, if there be embodied inhabitants in the planets of other suns, or even in the other planets of

our own system, they have *forms* anything like ours. They may be square, orbicular, or of any other form. One analogy (physical analogy), however, strikes me as prevailing through every part of the universe that sight or science can reach, and that is—*fire*. The fixed stars are the remotest material existences we know of, and they certainly must be fire, like that which exists in a nearer part of the creation. This striking circumstance of similarity warrants the supposition of many more, in the physical phenomena of the distant parts of the universe—and may not this physical conformity warrant the supposition of a similarity in the *moral* phenomena of the different regions of the creation?

616. Some people's sensibility is a mere bundle of *aversions*, and you hear them display and parade it, not in recounting the things they are attached to, but in telling you how many things and persons they "*cannot bear*."

618. Mrs. —'s passions are like a little whirlwind—round and round; moving, active, but still *here*; do not carry her *forward*, away, into superior attainment.

619. Amusing idea, of playing *a concert of people*, that is, drawing forth the various passions, prejudices, &c., of a small company of persons, and mixing them, soothing them, exciting them, and, in short, entirely playing all their characters at the will, and by the unnoticed influence of the player.

620. A human being like Edwin (the Minstrel) would be the proper touchstone to bring into the routine of fashionable life, talk, amusements, &c.: what *his* feeling would nauseate *is* nauseous.

621. Conversational disquisition on novels. "I have often maintained that fiction *may* be much more instructive than real history. I think so still; but viewing the vast rout of novels *as they are*, I do think they do incalculable mischief. I wish we could collect them all together, and make one vast fire of them; I should exult to see the smoke of them ascend like that of Sodom and Gomorrah: the judgment would be as just."

622. One important rule belongs to the composition of a fiction, which I suppose the writers of fiction seldom think of, viz., never to fabricate or introduce a character to whom greater talents or wisdom is attributed than the author himself possesses; if he does, how shall this character be sustained? By what means should my own fictitious personage think or talk better than *myself*? The author may indeed *describe* his hero, and say that his Edward, or his Henry, or his Francis, is distinguished by genius, acuteness, profundity and comprehension of intellect, originality and pathos of sentiment, magical fancy, and everything else; this is all very soon done. But if this Henry, or Edward, or Clement, or whatever else it is, is to talk before us, then, unless the *author himself* has all these high qualities of mind, he cannot, like a ventriloquist, make them speak in the person of his hero. There will thus be a miserable discre-

pancy between what his hero was at his introduction described to be, and what he *proves himself* to be when he opens his mouth. We may easily imagine, then, how qualified the greatest number of novel writers are for devising thought, speech, and action for heroes, sages, philosophers, geniuses, wits, &c.!!! Yet this is what they all can do!!!

623. (Mention of having read a transcendent dramatic work.) "I never was so fiercely carried off by Pegasus before; the fellow neighed as he ascended."

625. Some one said that women remarked characters more discriminatively than men. I said, "They remark *manners* far more than *characters*. The mental force which might be compressed and pointed into a javelin, to pierce quite through a character, they splinter into little tiny darts to stick all over the features, complexion, attitude, drapery, &c. How often I have entered a room with the embarrassment of feeling that all my motions, gestures, postures, dress, &c., &c., &c., were critically appreciated, and self-complacently condemned; but at the same time with the bold consciousness that the inquisition could reach no further. I have said with myself, "My *character*, that is the *man*, laughs at you behind this veil; I may be the devil for what you can tell; and you would not perceive neither if I were an angel of light."

626. (Said of an exquisitely soft and pensive evening), "It is as if the soul of Eloisa pervaded all the air."

627. How hopeless is the attempt to anticipate the final, fixed state of either one's opinions or sentiments! How they for ever fluctuate to the various influence of changing scenes, social affections, and advancing life. If I should live to the age of sixty, the radical character of my mind and my heart will probably be the same as now, but the possible modifications are infinite! One thing is certain; that cheerfulness is not among those possibilities, for that would be a radical change. And how impossible is it to give one's own perceptions to those who are coming after one in the course of life! With what a mixture of pity, envy, occasional pride, but above all, *dissociation*, one regards their unadept fancies, hopes, and notions!

If one deem one's self a superior mind, one knows, of course, that in no length of time many will ever come to the point where *I* now stand. Their walk is along the common road; mine has been through the untrodden vales and hills. I heard several aged persons expressing their high admiration of a book which *I* admired when I was *fifteen*, but when I was twenty admired no more.

630. Shakspeare had perceptions of every kind; he could think *every way*. His mind might be compared to that monster the prophet saw in his vision, which *had eyes all over*.

631. I heard lately an educated lady say she did not admire Shakspeare at all. *I* admired *her*. It has often struck me as curious to observe the entire, unhesitating *self-complacency* with which characters assume to admire and detest, in opposition to the concurrent opinions of



all the most enlightened and thinking minds. . . . With all this self-satisfied feeling, the most ignorant, or the most illiberal, hearers of sermons pronounce on the talents, &c., of the preachers.

632. I remember buying some trifle of, I think, a fruit-woman, in Ireland, who held me back the piece of money, and requested me, as it was the first money she had taken that day, to "spit on it for luck." I here regret having made no memoranda of the vast number of curious anecdotes, incidents, and odd glimpses of human nature which one has met with in the course of years, and forgotten.

635. Superlative value in connexions of friendship or love, of mutual discrimination. I cannot love a person who does not recognize my *individual* character. It is most gratifying, even at the expense of every fault being clearly perceived, to see that in my friend's mind there is a standard, or scale of degrees, and that he exactly perceives which degree on this scale *I reach* to. What nonsense is sometimes inculcated on married persons and on children in regard to their parents, about *being blind to their faults*, at the very time, forsooth, they are to cultivate their reason to the utmost accuracy, and to apply it fully in *all other* instances! as if, too, this duty of blindness depended on the will!

All strenuous moral speculations, all high ideas of perfection, must be pursued at the expense of all human characters around us. The defects of our friends will strike us, whether we will or not, while we study the sublime theory, and strike us the more, the more distinctly we understand the theory and them. They will often *force their aid* on us in the form of contrast. This cannot be helped; the truth and the consequent feelings must take their course.

636. *Quantity of existence* may perhaps be a proper phrase for that, the less or more of which causes the less or more of our interest in the individuals around us. The person who gives us most the idea of ample being, interests us the most. Something certainly depends on the *mortification* of this being, and something on its comprising *each of the parts* requisite to *completeness*; but still perhaps the most depends on its *quantity*. This is the principle of my attachment to Y. I do not exactly like the *modification*, and there seems a defect of one article or two to *entireness*; but I am gratified by the ample measure. Z. has both the ample quantity of being, and the charming modification, and the entire number of parts; Z. is therefore the most interesting individual I know.

637. (Expression in an evening prayer.) "May we consider each night as the tomb of the departed day, and, seriously leaning over it, read the inscription written by conscience, of its character and exit."

638. (Said on being requested to translate Buchanan's incomparable Latin Ode to May.) "It would be like the attempt to paint a sun-setting cloud-scene."

639. A young lady, whose perceptions were often natural and correct without her being able to appreciate them, said to a friend of mine, "I like to walk in the country with you because you are pleased with re-

marking objects and talking of them. The companions I have been accustomed to would say, when I wished to do this, 'Caroline, *take less notice of the fields and more of the company!!!*' This young woman, amidst much puerility, would frequently express, unconscious of their value, feelings so natural and just as to be quite interesting, and sometimes even striking to a philosopher. I compared her to the African, James Albert, who, when come to England and in possession of money, would give to a beggar as it might happen, a penny or a half-guinea, unapprised of the respective value of each.

640. Among married persons of the common size and texture of minds, the grievances they occasion one another are rather feelings of *irritated temper* than of *hurt sentiment*; an important distinction. Of the latter perhaps they were never capable, or perhaps have long since worn out the capability. Their pain, therefore, is far less deep and acute than a *sentimental* observer would suppose, or would in the same circumstances, with *their own* feelings, suffer.

641. Some people's religion is for want of *sense*; if they had this, they would have no religion, for their religion is no more than prejudice—superstition.

642. A man or woman with a stupid or perverse partner, but still hoping to see this partner become all that is desired, is like a man with a wooden leg wishing it might become a vital one, and sometimes for a moment fancying this almost possible.

642.\* The presence of a third person gives a more balanced feeling with respect to an individual that interests one too much.

643. Common-place truth is of no use, as it makes no impression; it is no more instruction than *wind is music*. The truth must take a *particular bearing*, as the wind must pass through tubes, to be anything worth.

644. Many years are now gone since the conduct and the responsibility of my own education devolved entirely on myself. It is not necessary to review these years in order to estimate the manner in which this momentous charge has been executed. The present state of my mind and character supplies a mortifying excess of proof, that the interesting work has been conducted ill.

645. P. made some most interesting observations on the *moral effect* of the study of natural philosophy, including astronomy. He denied as a general fact, the tendency of even this last grand science to expand, sublime, or moralize the mind. He had talked with the famous Dr. Herschel. It was of course to suppose, *à priori*, that Herschel's studies would alternately intoxicate him with reverie, almost to delirium, and carry him irresistibly away towards the throne of the divine Majesty. P. questioned him on the subject. Herschel told him that these effects took place in his mind in but a very small degree; much less, probably, than in the mind of a poet without any science at all. Neither a *habit of pious feeling*, nor any peculiar and transcendent *emotions* of piety, were at all the necessary consequence.

646. On observation. The capabilities of any sphere of observation are in proportion to the force and number of the observer's faculties, studies, interests. In one given extent of space, or in one walk, one person will be struck by five objects, another by ten, another by a hundred, some by none at all.

Power of mind and refinement of feeling being supposed equal, the number of a person's interests and classes of knowledge will have a great effect to extend or confine his sphere of observation. Was struck lately in remarking Lunell's superiority over me in this respect. In a given scene or walk, I should make original observations belonging to the general laws of taste, to fancy, sentiment, moral reflection, religion; so would he, with great success; but, *in addition*, he would make observations in reference to the arts, to geographical comparison, to historical comparison, to commercial interest, to the artificial laws of elegance, to the existing institutions of society. Every new class of knowledge, then, and every new subject of interest, becomes to an observer a new sense, to notice innumerable facts and ideas, and consequently receive endless pleasurable and instructive hints, to which he had been else as insensible as a man asleep. This is like employing at once all the various modes of catching birds, instead of one only. It is another question, whether the mind's observing powers will act less advantageously in any one given direction from being diverted into so many directions.

647. Have just seen the moon rise, and wish the image to be eternal. I never beheld her in so much character, nor with so much sentiment, all these thirty years that I have lived. Emerging from a dark mountain of clouds, she appeared in a dim sky, which gave a sombre tinge to her most majestic aspect. It seemed an aspect of solemn, retiring severity, which had long forgotten to smile; the aspect of a being which had no sympathies with this world,—of a being totally regardless of notice, and having long since, with a gloomy dignity, resigned the hope of doing any good, yet proceeding with composed, unchangeable self-determination to fulfil her destiny, and even now looking over the world at its accomplishment. (Happy part of the figure.) Felt it difficult to divest the moon of that personality and consciousness which my imagination had recognized from the first moment. With an effort, alternated the ideas of her being a mere lucid body, and of her being a conscious power, and felt the latter infinitely more interesting, and even more as if it were natural and real. Do not know how I found in the still shades, that dimmed in solemnness the lower part of her orb, the suggestion of immortality, and the wish to be a "disembodied power." Question to the silent spirits of the night, "What is your manner of feeling as you contemplate all these scenes? Are yours all ideas of absolute *science*, or do they swim in visionary fancy?" The apprehension of soon losing my power of *seeing* a world so superabundant of sentiment and soul, is very mournful.\*

\* May, 1801. A worthy friend gave me this book with a request that I

648. Made in conversation, but cannot recollect sufficiently to write, a vivid and happy display of what may be called *physiopathy*, a faculty of pervading all Nature with one's *own being*, so as to have a perception, a life, and an agency in all things. A person of such a mind stands and gazes at a tree, for instance, till the object becomes all wonderful, and is transfigured into something visionary and ideal. He is amazed what a tree is, how it could, from a little stem which a worm might crop, rise up into that majestic size, and how it could ramify into such multitudinous extent of boughs, twigs, and leaves. Fancy climbs up from its root like ivy, and twines round and round it, and extends to its remotest shoots and trembling foliage. But this is not all; the tree soon becomes to your imagination a *conscious* being, and looks at you, and communes with you; ideas cluster on each branch, meanings emanate from every twig. Its tallness and size look conscious majesty; roaring in the wind its movements express tremendous emotion. In sunshine or soft showers it carries a gay, a tender, or a pensive character; it frowns in winter on a gloomy day. If you observe a man of this order, though his body be a small thing, invested completely with a little cloth, he expands his being in a grand circle all around him. He feels as if he grew in the grass, and flowers, and groves; as if he stood on yonder distant mountain-top, conversing with clouds, or sublimely sporting among their imaged precipices, caverns, and ruins. He flows in that river, chafes in its cascades, smiles in the aqueous flowers, frisks in the fishes. He is sympathetic with every bird, and seems to feel the sentiment that prompts the song of each. (This, in one sense, is "inheriting all 'hings.")

650. Lord Chatham in his speeches did not *reason*; he struck, as by intuition, directly on the *results* of reasoning; as a cannon-shot strikes the mark without your seeing its course through the air as it moves towards its object.

651. Readers in general who have an object beyond amusement, yet are not apprised of the most important use of reading, the acquisition of *power*. Their *knowledge* is not power; and, too, the memory retains but the small part of the knowledge of which a book should be full; the grand object, then, should be to improve the strength and tone of the mind by a thinking, analysing, discriminating, *manner* of reading.

652. I have observed, that most ladies who have had what is considered

would fill it with my own thoughts, in any form, of essays, sermons, fragments, or sentences, and then return it to him.—I am sensible of the compliment; but cannot be so liberal of the very scanty productions of my mind as to comply with the request. I therefore retain the book as my own, and entirely for my own use. The ominous symptoms in my eyes do not leave me the hope of preserving the power of sight long enough to write it full. I turn from a view of the vernal beauties that are spreading all around me, with sad emotion, to think that probably in a little while, all the creation will be to me shrouded in a night which nothing will irradiate but the *sun of the other world*." *Note by Mr. Foster in a MS. volume.*

as an education, have no idea of an education progressive through life. Having attained a certain measure of accomplishment, knowledge, manners, &c., they consider themselves as *made up*, and so take their station; they are pictures which, being quite finished, are now put in a frame—a *gilded* one, if possible—and hung up in permanence of beauty! in permanence, that is to say, till Old Time, with his rude and dirty fingers, soil the charming colors.

653. Fine sensibilities are like woodbines, delightful luxuries of beauty to twine round a solid, *upright, stem of understanding*; but very poor things, if, unsustained by strength, they are left to creep along the ground.

658. How should a mind, capable of any intellectual or moral ambition, feel at the thought of transcendent examples of talent and achievement? Suggested on awaking at a late hour, and instantly recollecting—"Now Buonaparte has probably been four hours employed this morning in thinking of the arrangements of the greatest empire on earth, and I——."

672. Represented strongly to a young lady the importance of a *taste for the sublime*, as a most powerful ally to all moral, all religious, all dignified plans of happiness.

685. I have once more been throwing an eager gaze over the heaven of stars, with the alternate feelings of shrinking into an atom and expanding into an angel—what I but am now! what I may be hereafter! I am amazed that so transcendently awful a spectacle should seize attention so seldom, and affect the habit of thought so little. What is the most magnificent page of a heroic poem, compared with such an expanse of glorious images? It seems the grand portico into that infinity in which the incomprehensible Being resides. Oh, that this soul should have within itself so little of that amplitude and that divine splendor which deify the scene that for ever environs it! Mortifying, that my scope of existence is so little, with the feeling as if it might be so vast. The hemisphere of thought surely ought to have some analogy with the hemisphere of vision. Most mortifying, that this wondrous, boundless universe should be so little *mine*, either by knowledge, or by *assimilating influence*! But this vision gives a delightful omen of what the never-dying *mind* may at length behold—may at last become! Oh, may I never again disobey or forget a Power whose existence pervades all yonder stars, and is their grandeur. It is indeed possible to engage his attention, and enjoy his friendship for ever! In this comparison, what becomes of the importance of our human friendships? Yet still I am *man*, and the social, tender sentiment at this very moment says in my heart, there are one or two dear persons whom I cannot but wish to have for my affectionate, impassioned associates in exploring those divine regions.

687. How all little systematic forms of theology vanish from the soul in the sublime endeavor to recognize, amid his own amazing works, *the Deity of the universe*! i. e. to form such an idea of him, as shall be felt to be worthy to represent the Creator and preserving Governor of such a scene.

689. (Hearing an excellent sermon)—most monstrous truth—that this sermon, composed of perhaps two hundred just thoughts, will, by the evening hour, be forgotten by all the hearers except—how many? Yet *every* just thought of religion requires its counterpart in feeling and action, or does it *not*?

690. Here now the inestimable gifts of religion are carried round to 400 people (the congregation)—if it could be made visible, how many take them, and what part of them, and how much, and how many let them pass by, and *why*?

691. Surely the human mind, quenched as it is in a body, with all that body's sensations, is not a thing to be worked upon by the presentation of truth! How little, in general, it thinks or cares about the whole displayed firmament of truth, with all its constellations. No! the case of mankind is desperate, unless a continual miracle interpose.

693. Many things may descend from *the sky of truth* without deeply striking and interesting men; as from the sky of clouds, rain, snow, &c., may descend without exciting ardent attention; it must be large hail-stones, the sound of thunder, torrent-rain, and the lightning-flash; analogous to these must be the ideas and propositions which strike men's minds.

702. A person who can be habitually in the company of a communicative man of original genius for a considerable time, without being greatly modified, is either a very great, or a contemptibly little, being; he has either the *vigorous* firmness of the oak, or the *heavy* firmness of a stone.

704. I have the highest opinion of the value of a *ruling passion*; but if this passion monopolizes all the man, it requires that the object be a very comprehensive or a very dignified one, to save him from being ridiculous. The devoted *antiquary*, for instance, who is passionately in love with an old coin, an old button, or an old nail, is ridiculous. The man who is *nothing but* a musician, and recognizes nothing in the whole creation but crotchets and quavers, is ridiculous. So is the *nothing but* verbal critic, to whom the adjustment of a few insignificant particles in some ancient author, appears a more important study than the grandest arrangements of politics or morals. Even the total devotee to the grand science *Astronomy*, incurs the same misfortune. Religion and morals have a noble pre-eminence here; no man can become ridiculous by his passionate devotion to *them*; even a *specific* direction of this passion will make a man sublime, witness *Howard*; *specific* I say, and correctly, though, at the same time, *any* large plan of benevolence must be comprehensive, so to speak, of a large quantity of morals.

705. Delightful conversational reverie on the idea of an angel living, walking, conversing with one for a month. Month of ecstatic sentiment! What profound and incurable regrets for his going away!

707. All *reasoning* is *retrospect*; it consists in the application of facts and principles previously known. This will show the very great importance of knowledge, especially that kind which is called *Experience*.

708. The question that leads most directly to the true estimate of a man's talents (I asked myself this question after having been several times in Mr. Hall's company) is this: How much of *new* would prove to be gained to the region of truth, by the assemblage of all that his mind has contributed? The highest order of talent is certainly the power of revelation—the power of imparting new propositions of important truth: inspiration, therefore, while it continued in a given mind, might be called the paramount talent. The second order of talent is, perhaps, the power of development—the power of disclosing the reasons and the proofs of principles, and the causes of facts. The third order of talents is, perhaps, the power of application—the power of adapting truth to effect.

709. A very respectable widow, remarking on matrimonial quarrels, said that the first quarrel that goes the length of any harsh or contemptuous language, is an unfortunate *epoch* in married life, for that the delicate respectfulness being thus *once* broken down, the same kind of language much more easily comes afterwards; there is a feeling of having *less* to love than before.

710. When expressing a conjecture that, as in the previous course of love, so after marriage, it may be that *reconciliations* after disagreements are accompanied by a peculiar fascinating tenderness,—I was told by a very sensible experimentalist that the possibility of this feeling continues but for a while, and that it will be extremely perceptible when the period is come, that no such felicitous charm will compensate for domestic misunderstandings. I, however, cannot but think that when this period is come, the sentimental enthusiasm is greatly subsided,—that its most enchanting interest is, indeed, quite gone off.

712. An observant man, in all his intercourse with society and the world, carries a *pencil* constantly in his hand, and, unperceived, marks on every person and thing the figure expressive of its value, and therefore instantly on meeting that person or thing again, knows what kind and degree of attention to give it. This is to make something of experience.

715. It seems a thing to be regretted that so much of our Lord's *conversation*, consisting of momentous and infallible truth, should have been irretrievably lost. How much larger, and, if one may say so, how much more valuable, the New Testament would have been if all the instructions he uttered had been recorded. By what principle of preference were the conversations which the Evangelists record, preserved, rather than the others which are lost? That he did many things that are not recorded is distinctly said by John, last chapter, last verse.

719. Process of the physical creation. Darkness brooding, dim dreary light, herbs, sun, &c. *Analogy*. Consider the whole course of time as the world's *moral creation*. At what period and stage in the analogy has it *now* arrived?—not more than *the first day*.

721. Effect of the application of astronomical science, or rather of the *immense* ideas derived from astronomy, to *modify* theological notions from the state in which divines exhibit them. (v. 687.)

725. A picture of a precipice reflected in a deep pit, transcendently beautiful! A small cascade from the top falling and fretting on point after point of the rocky precipice. Most beautiful aquatic green, in many recesses of the precipice nourished by this water. I wandered and gazed here five years since. Dismal sombre look of the farthest point of the shelving rock, visible down through the dark water of the pit. Pretty innocent dimples on the surface of this pit, caused by a gentle breath of air. Analogy—Deep villain smiles.

726. Most magical succession, for several miles, of reflections on the glassy surface of a canal, of the adjacent hill and wood scenery. One stripe of reflection of a distant scene, and a grand one, in a small narrow piece of water in a field, so that this foreign piece seemed joined into the verdant field. Analogy—transient view of heaven in this common life.

728. Saw a *halcyon*; felt more respect for it on account of its classical celebrity, than a common bird. But how arbitrary are these distinctions; the bird has no dignified consciousness of superiority, and, except for its beauty, possesses none.

729. Recollective remark on my fastidiousness, in respect of personalities of kindness. I know scarcely *any man* by whose taking my arm in walking along I should be cordially gratified, and *not very many women*.

730. Observed with interest the tumults occasioned in a canal, by the sluice of the lock being opened; but recollected what vast commotion must be caused by the rebound of Niagara, and instantly turned away.

731. Hope to derive considerable influence toward simplicity and refinement from my *pathetic* conversations with so many charming natural scenes.

733. Every day struck with the wretched and barbarous appearance, and the coarse manners of the populace. (This was, I believe, in Lancashire.) How most astonishing that the Creator should have placed so many millions of the creatures he has endowed with noble faculties (or the seeds of them), in situations where these faculties and the whole being are inevitably debased! Wonder again what really could be done by political institution managed by a Buonaparte in morals. I cannot, will not, believe that all must *necessarily be thus*.

734. (Conclusion of a moral, monitory letter to a young acquaintance.) "I scarcely need to remark on the value of youth, with all its living energy; but I may express my regret at seeing all around me, a possession so sweet and fair, so miserably poisoned and stained. I have only a question or two for you. Why do you think it happy to be young? Why? When you shall be advanced toward the conclusion of life, why will you think it happy to *have been* young? Is there the least possibility or danger that then you may not think so at all? Why do you look with pleasure on the scene of coming life? Does the pleasure spring from a sentiment less noble than the hope of securing as you go on, those inestimable attainments which will not decay with declining life, and may consequently set age, and time, and dissolution



at defiance? You gladly ~~now~~ see life before you, but there is a moment which you are destined to meet when you will have passed across it, and will find yourself at the farther edge. Are you perfectly certain, that at that moment you will be in possession of something that will enable you not to care that life is gone? If you should *not*, what then?

(I transcribe the conclusion, because the entire copy is not worth preserving. It was written to a young woman, the daughter of one of the members of a church to which I preached, whose unfortunate circumstances engaged a measure of my benevolence. I proposed writing several more letters adapted to insinuate instruction. No. 500 was the beginning of the second, which I never finished nor sent; I found the person was so worthless, that any continued attention would involve my character.)

735. Important reflection in opposition to the regret of not having seen more of the world in each of its departments. "But I have seen far more of the world, *i. e.*, of event, character, and natural scenes, than I have *turned into knowledge*,—and this alone could be the value of seeing still more."

737. "Looking at these objects is reading!" said I to myself, while beholding sheep, meads, &c. "Is not this more than reading descriptions of these things?" I had been regretting how little I had read respecting some things that can be seen.

739. (Written in a very pensive mood, and when disposed to complain (unjustly) of the manners of an inestimable and interesting friend.)

— Feel this insuperable individuality. Something seems to say, "Come, come away; I am but a gloomy ghost among the living and the happy. There is no need of me; I shall never be loved as I wish to be loved, and as I could love. I will converse with my friends in solitude; *then* they seem to be *within* my soul; when I am with them they seem to be *without* it. They do not need the new felicities I could impart; it is not generous to tax their sympathies with my sorrows; and these sorrows have an aspect on myself which no other person can see. I can never become deeply important to any one; and the unsuccessful effort to become so costs too much, in the painful sentiment which the affections feel when they return mortified from the fervent attempt to give themselves to some heart which would welcome them with a pathetic warmth."

740. (The following, too, of the same date, chiefly respects the same person.)

"*Omnis in hoc*," is the description of the only character that I can give myself to entirely. Green was very much this; a mind not only of deep tone, but *always* so. "*Omnis in hoc*;" yes, I want in my associate something like continuous emotion. I hate a neutral reposing state of the passions, that kind of tranquillity which is merely the absence of all pregnant sentiment. I pass some time with a friend in the high excitement of interesting, perhaps impassioned conversation; next day I

revisit this friend for the sequel of this energetic season, myself glowing with the same feelings still. Well, with my friend the enthusiasm is all gone by; his feelings are tame and easy; yesterday he was grave, ardent, every particle imbued with sentiment; we became interested to the pitch of intensity; I thought, "Let this become our *habitu* and we shall become sublime." To-day he is in an easy, careless mood; the heroic episode is past and over; he is perhaps sprightly and flippant; his voice has recovered from its tone of soul; and he is perhaps complacently busy about some mere trifles. My heart shuts itself up and feels a painful chill; I am glad to be gone to indulge alone my musings of regret and insulation. *Women* have more of this discontinuity than men. No one can be more than — interested to-day, and *degagée* to-morrow.

A man of melancholy feelings peculiarly feels this revulsion, with those who are pensive only as an occasional sentiment; not like himself, as a *habitu*. His associates should all be of his own character. He emphatically wants *unity* of character in his friend.

I have more of habitual character than you —. A person would better know where in the mental world to find me. The ascendant interest of yesterday is the ascendant interest of to-day too. It is unfortunate in character for its nobler aspects to be transient. You have not sufficiently a grand commanding principle of seriousness to pervade and harmonize the total of your habits. A love of the sublime is with you a sentiment; with *me* it is a passion. In the gaiety of innocence you sport at liberty, forgetful that a moral and immortal being should have all its faculties and feelings concentrated toward an important purpose. No one has given all the passion due to great objects till trivial ones have ceased to amuse him into even a temporary oblivion of them. Yes, after attention to the most solemn speculations, you can escape so completely from their fascination, so soon brighten off their interesting *sombre*, and enter into a mirthful party, and laugh with the utmost glee and *gaieté du cœur*. Not so I; not so Edwin, if he were a person of real life; not so Howard; not so any one who is seized irrecoverably with a spirit of ardor till death. Yes, my friend, you let yourself be what may happen, rather than deliberately determine to be what you should, and all you can.

741. Will endeavor not to forget the impressive lessons on *education*, both as to the importance and the mode of it, supplied by Mr. —'s family, the best school for instruction on this subject I ever saw. In that family, the whole system and all the parts of it are so *correctly and transcendently bad*, that it is only necessary to adopt a directly opposite plan in every point to be exactly right.

I suppose it never occurs to parents that to throw vilely educated young people on the world is, independently of the injury to the young people themselves, a positive *crime*, and of very great magnitude; as great for instance, as burning their neighbor's house, or poisoning the

water in his well. In pointing out to them what is wrong, even if they acknowledge the justness of the statement, one cannot make them feel a sense of *guilt*, as in other proved charges. That they *love* their children extenuates to their consciences every parental folly that may at last produce in the children every desperate vice.

742. At an association lately, observed how little human beings as individuals interest one another, beyond the very narrow limits of relationship, love, or uncommonly devoted friendship. There were several persons with whom I had been acquainted complacently, but without any particular attachment several years before; and had not seen them for a considerable interval. We met, shook hands, "How do you do?" "I am glad to see you." "What have you been doing all this while?" with a mutual slight smile of complaisance, or of transient kindness, and then in a minute or two we had passed each other, to perform the same ceremony in some other part of the room, without any further recollection or care respecting each other. And yet these insipid assemblages of people from a hundred miles' distance are said to be, in a great measure, for the sake of affection, friendship, &c.

So in London lately, my acquaintance might happen, or might not happen, to make a slight inquiry about some subject deeply interesting to myself; and if they *had* happened, by the time that I had *constructed* the first sentence of reply, the question was forgotten and something else adverted to. So one does one's self in the same case; so every one does; we are interested only about self, or about those who form a part of our self-interest. Beyond all other extravagances of folly is that of expecting or wishing to live in a great number of hearts. How very *reasonably* - *probable* is the prevalence of Godwin's universal philanthropy!!

744. The eloquent Coleridge sometimes retires into a sublime mysticism of thought; he robes himself in moon-light, and moves among images of which we cannot be assured for a while whether they are substantial forms of sense or fantastic visions.

745. *Powers of Language.* *Qy.* Are the powers—the capacity of human language limited by any other bounds than those which limit the mind's powers of conception? Is there within the possibility of human conception a certain order of ideas which no combinations of language could express? Would the English language, for example, in its strongest possible structure absolutely sink and fail under such conceptions as we may imagine a mighty spirit of the superior or nether regions to utter—so frail as not to make these ideas distinctly apparent to the human mind, supposing all the while that the mind could fully admit and comprehend these ideas, if there were any adequate vehicle to convey them? Could divine inspiration itself, without changing the structure of the mind, impart to it such ideas as no language could express? If a poet were to come into the world endowed with a genius, suppose ten times more sublime than *Milton's*, must he not abandon the attempt at composition in despair, from finding that language, like a feeble tool, breaks in

his hand—from finding that when he attempts to pour any of his mental fluid into the vessel of language, that vessel in a moment melts or bursts;—from finding, that though he is *Hercules* every inch, he is armed but with a distaff, and cannot give his mighty strength its proportional effect without his *club*?

748. The successes of intellectual effort are never so great as when aided by the affections that animate social converse.

753. A great defect in the intellectual economy of my life; I have made many observations on men and things, but have let these observations remain in *insulated bits*, and have seldom referred them to any general principles of truth, or of the philosophy of the human mind. Such observations have a particular use when applied to circumstances, but not the general use of perfecting system, or illustrating theory. *Qy.* Has this defect been owing to indolence or incapacity?

754. Struck lately at observing in myself with how little change of feeling I passed from an address to the Deity, to an apostrophe to an absent friend. It was indeed a very dear friend.

756. Every thinker, writer, and speaker, ought to be apprised that *understanding* is the basis of all mental excellence, and that none of the faculties projecting *beyond* this basis can be either firm or graceful. A mind may have great dignity and power, whose *basis* of judgment, to carry on the figure, is broader than the other faculties that form the superstructure: thus a man whose memory is less than his understanding, and his imagination less than his memory, and his wit none at all, may be an extremely respectable, able man—as a pyramid is sufficiently graceful and infinitely strong;—but not so a man whose memory or fancy is the widest faculty, and then his judgment more confined. Not but that a man may have a powerful understanding while he has a still more powerful imagination; but he would be a much superior man to what he is now, if his understanding could be extended to the dimensions of his fancy, and his fancy reduced to the dimensions of his present understanding, the faculties thus changing places.

In eloquence, and even in poetry, which seems so much the lawful province of imagination, should imagination be ever so warm and redundant, yet unless a sound discriminating judgment likewise appear, *it is not true poetry*; no more than it would be painting if a man took the colors and brush of a painter, and stained the paper or canvas with *mere patches of color*. I can thus exhibit *colors* as well as he, but I cannot produce his *forms*, to which his colors are quite secondary.

Images are to sense what colors are to design. The productions of intellect and fancy combined are to those of good intellect alone, what a *picture* is to a *drawing*; each must have correct form, proportions, light and shade, &c.,—with these alone the drawing may be pleasing and striking—at least it will *do*; the picture having both these recommendations, and the richness of colors in addition, is much more beautiful and like reality;—but the drawing is preferable to a square mile of mere colors.

In short no orator or poet can possibly be a *better* orator or poet than he is a *thinker*.

757. Effect on my cast of ideas from musing so much *sub dio*. A sort of vacant outline of greatness; a wideness of compass without solidity and exactness.

760. Divine wisdom has allotted various kinds and divisions of ability to human minds, and each ought to be content with his own when he has ascertained *what*, and of what dimensions it really is. Let not a poet be vexed that he is not as much adapted to mathematics as to poetry; let not an ingenious mechanic regret that he has not the powers of eloquence, sentiment, and fancy. Let each cultivate to its utmost extent his *proper* talent; but still remembering that *one part* of the mind depends very much on the *whole*, and that therefore every power should receive an attentive cultivation, and that various acquisitions are necessary in order to give full effect to the one in which we may excel.

To *reason* well, is most essential to *all kinds* of mental superiority. The Bible forcibly displays this division of forces, under the illustration of the human body, 1 Cor. xii.

761. A very important principle in education, never to confine children long to any one occupation or place. It is totally against their nature, as indicated in all their voluntary exercises. Was very much struck with this consideration to-day. I was incommoded a while by three or four children in front of the house, who made an obstreperous noise, from the glee of some amusement that seemed to please them exceedingly. But I *knew* that they would not be pleased very long; accordingly in about half an hour they were tired of sport, and went off in quest of something else. I inferred the impossibility, in the discipline of education, of totally restraining the innate propensity, and the folly of attempting it.

762. Observed with regret one or two children of a respectable family mingling in this group with several little dirty, profane blackguards. *Qu.* As to the best method of preventing all communication of children meant to be educated in the best manner, with all other children, whether of the vulgar class, or the genteel, which will do as much mischief as the vulgar.

764. Went to Thornbury Church, in order to ascend the tower, which is very high. Walked (Hughes and I) about awhile in the church. Saw one or two ancient monumental inscriptions, and looked with intense disgust, as I always do, at the stupid exhibitions of coarsely-executed heraldry. Ascended the tower. Observed both in the staircase of the tower, and on the leaden roof of the church, the initials of the names of visitants, some of whom must now have been dead a century. Reflections on the forbearance of Time, in not obliterating these memorials; on the persons who cut or drew these rude remarks, their motives for doing it, their present state in some other world; the succession of events and lives since these marks were made, &c. Waited a good

while before we could open the small door which opens from the top of the staircase to the platform of the tower. Amusing play with my own mind on the momentary expectation of beholding the wide beautiful view, though just now confined in a narrow darkish position. Difference as to the state of the mind, as to its perceptions, between having, or not having, a little stone and mortar close around one. Came on the top. The rooks, jackdaws, or whatever they are that frequent this kind of buildings, flew away. So ere long we hope everything that belongs to the established church, at the approach of dissenters, will be off.

Admired the extensive view; looked down on the ruins of an ancient castle in the vicinity; frightful effect of looking directly down much lessened by the structure all around the top, of turrets, high parapet, and a slight projection just below the edge. Yet felt a sensation; thought of this as a mode of execution for a criminal or a martyr. Endeavored to realize the state of being impelled to the edge and lifted over it. Endeavored to imagine the state of a person whose dearest friend should perhaps, in consequence of some unfortunate movement of his, fall off; degree and nature of the feeling that would effectually prompt him to throw himself after; morality of the act. *Qu.* Whether either of us have a friend, for whom one should have thus much feeling? Probability, from striking instances, that many *mothers* would do this for a child.

Examined the decaying stone-work; thought again of the lapse of ages; appearance of sedate indifference to all things, which these ancient structures wear to my imagination, which cannot see them long without personifying them. Thickets of moss on the stone. Noticed with surprise a species of vegetation on the surface of several plates of iron. Observed with an emotion of pleasure the scar of thunder on one of the turrets. Sublime and *enviable* office, if such there be, of the angels who wield the thunder and lightning. Descended from the place to which we shall probably ascend no more; this partly a serious, pensive idea; yet, do not care; what is the place, or any place, to us? We shall live when this is reduced to dust.

765. Repeated feeling, on traversing various rural scenes, of the multitudinous, overwhelming vastness of the creation. What a world of images, suggestions, mysteries!

766. We called on an affable, worthy, pious woman rather beginning to be aged (never married), who lives quite alone. Asked her whether she had not sometimes painful cravings for society. She said she had not; and that her habit was so settled to solitude, that she often felt the occasional hour spent with some other human beings tedious and teasing. We could not explain this fact. Long conversation, in walking on, respecting the social nature of man. *Why* is this being, that looks at me and talks, whose bosom is warm, and whose nature and wants resemble my own,—necessary to me? This kindred being whom I love, is more to me than all yonder stars of heaven, and than all the inanimate objects on earth. Delightful necessity of my nature! But to what a world of

disappointments and vexations is this social feeling liable, and how few are made happy by it, in any such degree as I picture to myself and long for!

768. Conjecture after observing the habits and conversation of some rustics, that, superstition excepted, these are identically the same as the habits and common places and diction of one or two centuries past. One thinks they could not have been at that time more ignorant, rude, and destitute of abstraction than now, and certainly the same causes that prevent *acquisition* will likewise prevent alteration. The *degree* remaining nearly the same, the *manner* cannot become much different.

769. Visit to a farmer. Has a wife and ten children. A great deal of mutual complacency between this pair. The children very pleasing. Played with several of them, particularly a delightful little boy and girl. Observed the various animals in the farm-yard. . . . Most amusing gambols of the little boy with a young dog. How soon children perceive if they are noticed. In many of their playful actions one cannot tell how much is from the excitement they feel from being looked at and talked of, and how much is from the simple promptings of their own inclination.

Observed a long time, in the fields, the down of thistles. Pleased in looking at the little feathery stars softly sailing through the air, and appearing bright in the beams of the setting sun. But next observed the little sportive flies, that show life and *will* in their movements. What a stupendous difference! Talked on education. The advantages of a large family. Importance of making a family a *society*, so as to preclude the need of other companions, and adscititious animation and adventure. Absolute necessity of preventing as far as possible any communication of the children with those of the neighborhood.

770. Very grand idea, presenting the sun and a comet as conscious beings, of hostile or dubious determination towards each other. The comet, though a less orb, yet fraught with inextinguishable ardor, passes near the sun in his course, and dares to look him in the face. The aspect of fearless calmness with which the greater orb regards him. I have the image, but cannot express it.—Fingal and Cathmor, &c.

771. Conversation on the philosophy of *Prayer*. Certain fact, that whenever a man prays aright, he forgets the philosophy of it, and feels as if his supplications *really would* make a difference in the determination and conduct of the Deity. In this spirit are the prayers recorded in the Bible.

773. Conversation on cruelty, and the cruel sports particularly among children and very young persons. Is not the pleasure of feeling and exhibiting *power* over other beings, a principal part of the gratification of cruelty?

774. What a divine enchantment there is in *mind* in every age and form. I have felt it this morning with little Sarah Gibbs, a child of three or four years old, who cannot yet articulate plainly, but of very extraor-

dinary character for observation, thoughtfulness, and grave, deep passions. I took her on my knee, played with her hands, stroked her cheek, and never felt so much interested by any child of her age. Not that she said anything scarcely; for though delighted as I knew with the attention of a person to whom she had been led to attach an idea of importance, she was serious, confused, and as it were self-inclosed; but I was certain that I held on my knee a being signally marked from her co-evals by an ample and deep-toned nature, of which perhaps the country could not furnish a parallel. She has a strange accuracy and discrimination in her remarks, and a sort of dignity of character which yet is not mingled with vanity, but which *puts one on terms of care* with her, and makes one *afraid* to treat her as a child, or do or say anything which may *offend her sense* of character. She is affectionate to enthusiasm, but without any childish playfulness. When angry she is not petulant but *incensed*. She is loquacious often with her companions and her school-mistress, but still it is all thought and no frisk. She is a favorite with them all. The expression of her countenance is so serious, that one might think it impossible for her to smile; indeed I have never seen her smile. Her parents are uncultivated people of the lower class, who have no perception of the value of such a jewel, and will probably throw it away. (Should not one be very much inclined to cite such an instance as something very like a proof, that children are born with very different proportions of the *capability* of mind?)

778. Mr. R. who has travelled over many parts of England, Scotland, and Wales, told me he had, at one time, a wish and a project to travel over France and the rest of the Continent. While musing on this favorite design, he one day entered the cathedral, at Worcester, in the time of service. Walking in the aisles, and listening to the organ which affected him very sensibly, his wish to travel began to glow and swell in his mind into an almost overwhelming passion, which bore him irresistibly to a determination. He could not have felt more if he had seen an apparition, or heard a voice from the sky. Every idea on the subject seemed to present itself to his mind with a surprising vivid clearness and force; and he believes, that from that moment, nothing could have prevented his undertaking the enterprise, but the commencement of the war.

This seemed to me a happy illustration and proof of what I had maintained a few days before, in a conversation on music, that it powerfully reinforces *any* passion which the mind is at the time indulging, or to which it is predisposed. This was maintained in opposition to several amateurs of music, who asserted that *sacred* music has a powerful tendency to produce, by its own influence, devotional feeling. They had mentioned, with strong approbation, a pair of reverend divines, who commonly make a small concert on the Sunday evening, and choose *sacred* music, as adapted to the *day*. The devotional effect of any music, except on devotional minds, was utterly denied and disproved; and it



was asserted that a young man, very susceptible to the impressions of music, if inclined to vicious pleasures, would probably feel the sacred music inflame to intensity, and, at the same time, invest with a kind of vicious seductive refinement, the propensities which would lead him from the concert to the brothel. By the same rule a devout man, who should be strongly affected by music, would probably, if other circumstances in the situation did not counteract, feel his devotion augmented by pathetic or solemn music.

779. What a stupendous progress in everything estimable and interesting would seem possible to be made by two tenderly associated human beings of sense and principle, in the course, say, of twelve or twenty years. Yes, most certainly; for one has been conscious of undergoing a considerable modification from associating even a month with some one or two interesting persons. Only suppose this process carried on, and how great in a few years the effect; and why is it absurd to suppose this process still carried on through successive time in domestic society? Yet how few examples of anything respectable in this way.

784. What endless deceptions of the senses may happen. This morning I mistook one object for a totally different one, in passing it many times within a few feet; till I happened to examine it, when in a moment the deception was destroyed. What a number of reports and recorded facts may be of this kind.

789. Spent part of an hour in company with a handsome young woman and a friendly little cat. The young woman was ignorant and unsocial. I felt as if I could more easily make *society* of the *cat*. I was, however, mortified and surprised at this feeling when I noticed it. It does, however, seem to be a law of our nature, at least of mine, that unless our intercourse with a human being can be of a certain order, we had rather play awhile with an inferior animal. Similar to this is the expedient one has often had recourse to, of talking a large quantity of mixed sense and nonsense to a little child, to even an insensible infant perhaps, from finding the toil or the impossibility of holding any rational intercourse with the parents. Fortunately, in this case the parents are often as much pleased as if one were talking to them all the while. One has, too, very often felt one's self making the child a kind of substitute for the parent, and thus easily saying to the parent in fact a great many things, some of which would have seemed too trifling, and some too grave or monitory, to have been spoken *directly* to the mature person.

790. Each fact that comes within one's observation, and illustrates or suggests some useful principles of conduct, should be set down in the memory as a lesson for one's own conduct, if one ever be in similar circumstances. *Remember* then, in case of illness and confinement, to cause as little trouble as possible to attendant friends; make a great and *philosophic* exertion to avoid this. There is good old Mr. B. here, a worthy man, and very kind to his family, chiefly daughters, all grown

up, and most of them married. He has suffered a very severe illness, which made it indispensable for some person to sit up with him all night. For eight or nine weeks two of his daughters have fulfilled this office alternately, with an occasional exemption by the aid of a third person. Nothing can exceed their assiduity and affection, notwithstanding that he is an extremely tiresome patient. But owing to their having families of their own, they can seldom go to sleep during the day, after the watching night. The health of one of them especially, is suffering materially, though she is far too generous to give him the smallest hint of it; and though he is greatly recovered, so as in the opinion of all his friends not to need this service now, yet he has no wish to dispense with it, nor seems ever to recollect how laborious and oppressive it must be; and will not allow other persons, even one of his other daughters, to watch with him as substitutes sometimes, to relieve the two who have borne the main weight of the service, and who, he thinks, can do it better than any one else. Strange inconsideration.

792. I observe that all animals *recognize* each other in the *face*, as instinctively conscious that there the being is peculiarly present. What a mysterious sentiment there is in one's recognition of a conscious being in the eye that looks at one, and emphatically if it have some peculiar significance with respect to one's self. A very striking feeling is caused by the opening on one of the eyes of any considerable animal, if it instantly have the expression of meaning. While the eye is shut the being seems not so completely *with* us, as when it looks through the opened organ. It is like holding in our hand a letter which we believe to contain most interesting meanings, but the seal secludes them from us.

793. A very respectable widow, who lost her husband ten or twelve years since, told me that even now the *last* image of her husband as she saw him ill, delirious and near death, generally first presents itself when she recollects him. I always think I would not choose to see a dear friend dead, because probably the last image would be the most prompt remembrance, and I should be sorry to have the dead image presented to me rather than the living.

794. It is a great sin against moral taste to mention ludicrously, or for ludicrous comparison, circumstances in the animal world which are painful or distressing to the animals that are in them. The simile, "Like a toad under a harrow," has been introduced in a way to excite a smile at the kind of *human* distress described, and perhaps that human distress might be truly ludicrous, for many such distresses there are among human beings; but then we should never assume as a parallel a circumstance of distress in another subject which is serious and real. The sufferings of the brute creation are to me much more sacred from ridicule or gaiety than those of men, *because* they never spring from fantastic passions and follies.

796. *Qu.* Whether two much attached friends, suppose a married

pair, might adopt a system of confidence so entire, as to be *total confes-sors* to each other; disclosing, for instance, at the end of each day, all the most unworthy or ungracious ideas and feelings that had passed through their minds during the course of it, both with respect to each other, and any other question or thing?

What would be the effect of this on characters of given degrees? and what degree of excellence must exist on each side, to prevent its having a most unfortunate effect on their mutual attachment?

~~~~~

XLII.\* TO MISS MARIA SNOOKE.

[On the Metropolis, No. 1.]

*New Bristol, March 14, 1803.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,—You have again been an observer now for several months of the various aspects of human life in the metropolis; a city exceeding, as to the number of inhabitants, and probably in many other respects, the far-famed Nineveh and Babylon. I have often thought of the interest I should feel in hearing you express the ideas suggested by the scene while they have the vividness of immediate impression. Perhaps these ideas would have been still more interesting if you had not become acquainted with the city at a period of life too early for thoughtful observance; and thus precluded in some measure from the impression of grand, diversified novelty, which is felt very powerfully by an observant person of mature age, and unaccustomed to the sight of great cities, on first entering this wonderful place. A person educated in a rural situation, if he have acquired the habit of viewing every scene with an appropriate feeling, and a mental scale of proportion by which to compare every new object with those known before, has a great advantage over one who has always resided in the metropolis, for seizing at least the superficial characteristics of the place. His attention is arrested by a thousand circumstances of significant peculiarity, of which a constant citizen has no perception, from having grown up amidst them, and from having no other sets of ideas and feelings to make these familiarized circumstances palpable by contrast. And even the visitant, if he protract his stay long enough to lose, if I may express it so, the *separateness* of his thought and feelings from the spirit of the place, and that freshness of mind which he brought from simpler scenes and contemplations, will find that he has lost much of his delicate perception of the distinctive appearances around him, so that he is scarcely conscious

\* This and the three following letters were prepared by Mr. Foster for the press, but laid aside as not suitable for a first publication. Vide *Letter to the Rev. John Fawcett, May 23, 1805.*

of noticing many things that at first glared on him with a most marked and obtrusive aspect. Are not you by this time sensible of something of this kind? On this account it would be a good method just to note in writing the most striking impressions that are made on the mind in the first days or hours that are spent in any remarkable place.

London is really a very wonderful place. I do not so much refer to its prominent inanimate features, its great buildings, its repositories of art and curiosities, its shipping, and its magnificent mass of habitations. Accumulations of brick, stone, and wood, are of very subordinate account, except indeed as some of them are the monuments of the industry, ingenuity, or superstition of past ages, and others the indication of the condition of the present inhabitants. What strikes me infinitely more is the astonishing assemblage of human beings. One human individual is to a thoughtful mind a most wonderful object; but in the midst of London you are conscious of being surrounded with eight or nine hundred thousand such individuals, collected together so thick and close, as to give at some moments the idea of one undivided, enormous living mass, of which the numerous streets are as the arteries and veins through which the stream of vitality is for ever flowing. You may walk on, and wonder where the moving mass will end. But there is *no* end; an unnumbered succession of faces still meets you, while you recollect, at every step, if thinking of what you see, These are not the same that I saw the last moment; and again, These are not the same that were passing me when I made that remark; what is become of all that are gone by? You are apprised at the same time that there is a much greater number in the houses that you pass. Some parts are so crammed that one might suppose there was not a single square league of ground unoccupied on this side the Arctic or Antarctic circle; or that if there be, some powers of pestilence and death possess it, and prohibit the intrusion of man to seek there space, air, and freedom. Image to yourself at the same time, if you can, all the other numerous streets with their moving crowds, and the numbers in the houses on each hand; and finally recollect that each of all this multitude has his thoughts, his tempers, his interests, and his cares, measuring still the importance of those interests and cares to each person by the importance which you feel in your own, and you will soon find that the contemplation and the scene contained within a few square miles, grows, like that of infinity, into a magnitude beyond the compass of the mind.

The extreme activity that prevails on every side, would seem partly allied to cheerfulness; but I own that the reflections by which I am subjected to be haunted amidst this vast display of eager and gay activity, are not of a very cheerful cast. I should have a mean opinion of the moral sensibility of the man that should not be mournfully impressed by a view of the depravity that is obvious and apparent, and which is but the slight external sign and indication of the enormous measure of unseen evil. This great city in desolation and ruins would be deemed a

most melancholy spectacle ; but is it not much more melancholy to see on so vast a scale the dignity of man in ruins ? Do you not feel it an awful consideration as you traverse the city, that there constantly rests on a few square miles around you, a measure of vice sufficient to poison an universe of corruptible beings ? Do you not feel something like what might have been felt by a man standing amidst the streams of Egypt, when Moses had turned the waters into blood ? If depravity as an abstraction could be clothed in a form which should render it perceptible by the eyes, the collective depravity of this magnificent city would be the most terrific and ominous apparition that man ever beheld. The fires and smokes that ascended from Sodom on its final morning, were not so dreadful an appearance as would be such a vision of its wickedness, and as would be such a vision of the vice of a modern great city. I do not think this is the language of excess. Even a man who would take only the laws of the land for his rule of judging, if he believe, or nearly believe, the statements and conjectures of the author of the "Police of the Metropolis," will stand aghast at the view. How much more melancholy, then, must it appear to a Christian moralist, who applies, even in the most candid spirit, the laws which determine the opinion of the Judge of the world !

It may be said, that if not a house of this city had ever been built, yet the persons who now inhabit it, wherever they had been scattered, would have had their vices. Yes, and those vices would have been too much for the happiness and moral beauty of the widest extent of inhabited country, over which they could have been diffused and attenuated. But in this scattered state they could not have stood up to view with the size and aspect of a frightful monster, such as they become when concentrated into a tremendous aggregate in one place. And their malignant *effect* would have been much less, as they must have operated in detail and unconnected, not as in the combined powers of a prodigious engine. The scattered, minute pieces of depravity, if I may use the expression, would have had only the power of wasps and spiders ; by their conjunction they become a hydra with many and immortal heads. Scattered vice could nowhere have had a grand magazine from which the powers of mischief could have been diffused so far as the influence of an immense city is known to extend.

I scarcely need to add the trite and obvious truth, that among a large assembly of men, depravity is augmented, not only in the simple proportion of the dispositions of the individuals, but likewise in proportion to the temptations, the facilities, the concealment, the sharpened intellects, the system, and the impunity, afforded by the combination of a multitude of similar dispositions. Probably it is a moderate supposition, that the measure of depravity in London is *twice* as great as the very same persons *could* have attained in opposite local circumstances.

One thinks, that if it were any part of the business of governments to take care of the morals of a people, they would do everything consistent

with the spirit of freedom to *prevent* them from accumulating into large cities. But certainly luxury, commerce, and pomp, are considerations of greater moment than the public morals and happiness !

Perhaps one of the first ideas of a total stranger to great cities, on entering London, would be, that such an immense concourse of human beings, so closely contiguous to one another, must make it a very social state. Where almost the very air is warmed with the emanation of human life, where man meets the countenance of his brother every moment ; where hundreds of families reside in a line, with only a few bricks between their abodes, and hundreds of others confront them at the distance of a few yards,—he might perhaps imagine a lively and ample circulation of fraternal kindness. Placed in such an intimate vicinity, they will almost have all things in common. What pleasures and pains of sympathy would he not imagine where there are so many to excite and share them ? He would soon find with surprise, that this crowded, contiguous state, is the most dissocial of all possible states of human beings. He would find that men are drawn to the mass, and that the mass is drawn together, not by sympathetic, but by selfish affections. It is a large company of strangers, each one of whom is considering how he may make his advantage of the rest, and totally unconcerned about their interests, if his own be successful.

A man walks along, glancing consciously or unconsciously on the countenances of five thousand persons in an hour, most of them deeply interested either on immediate affairs or in the general pursuit of happiness, and feels not the smallest concern respecting any of them. If they were a long row of trees the feeling would be much the same ;—and he perceives that he is an object of equal indifference to them. The momentary images of their features and expressions followed by others, all quickly vanish into oblivion. These faces may be seen no more ; and it is utterly of no consequence whether they be or not. An orange, for which he has just given twopence, seems a thing of more interest to him than any one of those men that pass him.

If I step into a shop on any trifling business, a few words and civilities are exchanged between me and the person who serves me ; we recognize human nature on both sides, and in five minutes after we are non-existent to each other. I mingle again among men with the same indifference, though surrounded every moment by an incalculable proportion of happiness or misery, elating or lacerating the hearts of persons whom I just recognize as living substances, scarcely worth looking at, as they pass me, and are gone.

The same principle of self-centring estrangement is apparent between families inhabiting adjoining houses, and even sometimes the same house, who are often as remote from each other, in respect of any friendly recognition, as if they inhabited the opposite extremities of a continent.

How little kindness is felt for human beings *as* human beings, if they

have no relation to my own advantage. Here, in the very heart and quintessence of the human world, where a thousand habitations of men may be seen at a glance, with doors that might give instant admittance, and tables at which the inhabitants regale,—a forlorn stranger, destitute of money, might faint and famish in the street, before kind-hearted *man* would notice or assist him; or if some slight relief is given—it is sometimes given—I have seen it given, with a hard insulting air and voice, which would have made me say, with myself, May I see that man no more for ever!

All these things appear to me very disastrous, and very alien from the sentiment which should pervade all human hearts, which is expressed by an ancient poet—"I am a man, and therefore I regard nothing human as foreign to me." But all this is the natural result of a vast and crowded population. For, in what manner is a kind sympathy to be cultivated? No man's heart contains a reservoir of kindness ample enough to be able to afford a friendly feeling to all and every one of a promiscuous multitude, most of whom are totally unknown to him, and the rest regarded simply as moving figures whose features he has seen before, or are recollected on the slender acquaintance of civility or fashion, or from transactions of business, without any approach to a reciprocation of heart. How is it possible to be affected with an expressly kind sentiment for each one that he meets or sees of such a number? If the multitude were to vanish away all but a very few, his benevolence would find it possible to take some account of them, even though they were strangers; but while the multitude still covers the scene, he can take account of none; the individuals are lost in the mass from which his heart stands aloof. But to be thus surrounded and in contact with human nature, without being able to give the sympathies which in its own right it seems to claim, has a pernicious effect on the heart; it has more than a negative tendency to produce the coldest selfish indifference. A multitude of human beings is thus a cause of being less human, and an apology for it. The claimants being innumerable exempts from the payment of the dues of cordiality to any.

It would be impossible for the spirit of union and sympathy to pervade so huge an aggregate, even if there were no definite principles of repulsion among them. But there are many. The ardent competition which inspirits a large portion of the activity of London, is most destructive of all expansive sympathies. A man sees that many hands are stretched out to seize the advantage which he likewise is anxious to seize, and that no consideration of his necessities, or wishes, or weakness, will induce the smallest forbearance or compromise in the strife, or compassion for his disappointments if he fail. Each one deems that the prize would be his, but for these voracious animals that contest it with him; and if he gain it, the pleasure of securing the good perhaps derives a little additional poignancy from the mortification of his rivals. What must be the effect of such a process, indefinitely repeated, on the

benevolence with which a man ought to regard his fellow-men, in whose minds too the same process is operating, so that each justifies himself if he thinks on the subject at all, by the necessity imposed on him by all the rest. Let any one recollect his own feeling, and the feeling apparent in others, when he has been in the midst of a crowd, at the entrance of some frequented public place, each struggling and pushing, himself among the rest, to enter first, for the convenience of accommodation: and he may imagine how much kindly, friendly softness of heart he should be likely to derive from habitually regarding human beings and himself, just as he regarded them then.

Again, the absolute certainty of being surrounded by a multitude of cheats and miscreants, such a number as could exist nowhere but in an immense city, with the difficulty of knowing who they are, or rather who they are not, has a baneful influence on extended kindness in this city. It produces necessarily a reluctance to confide, a quickness to perceive the *worse* indications of character in a man's manners, a suspicious watchfulness, a promptitude to hostility. It has often struck me, even in passing along the streets, that the defensive and vindictive feelings reside very near the surface; the most trivial incivility would kindle anger; and the sort of half-resentful inquietude may be excited even by an earnest or lingering look. The social decorum is a kind of armed neutrality, and each man carries a ready-written declaration of war in his pocket, to be forthcoming at a moment's warning.

The innumerable precautions by day and night, for the security of habitations and property, indicate what every one thinks of somebody else.

Another cause of the little regard felt by individuals for the mass of humanity in a great city is, that *number depreciates value*. Human beings are made too vulgar and plentiful to be anything worth. You can find them in multitudes any time, anywhere—are common as swarms of flies on a summer's day, and reduced to nearly the same insignificance, by the marvellous excess of their number (one is inclined to say *quantity*), and by the trivial importance which each is felt to bear to the whole; which whole, as I have said before, you can bring within no feeling of friendly approximation. The whole is a world, and an individual is but an atom; the one is too vast for your benevolent regard, the other too small.

It would be curious to make a scale of degrees of importance, which human beings may have to each other, according to the degrees of the facility of meeting with them. I would begin with Robinson Crusoe, to whom the appearance of a man was a circumstance of infinite interest; I would advance next to a thinly-scattered population, like that of the back settlements of America, where the infrequent visit of a neighbor, who travels leagues for the interview, must be a welcome surprise; and so forward through the various stages of population till I came to London. What a difference between the feeling of the solitary



islander at the sight of a human countenance, and that with which you meet or pass any one of the men or women in Fleet Street !

---

XLIII. TO MISS MARIA SNOOKE.

[On the Metropolis, No. II.]

*March 18, 1803.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,—It might be said in opposition to these observations that the inhabitants of a great city have their families, their friends, and their acquaintance, forming round each a little sphere in which the sympathetic affections are cherished, and powerfully operative ; and that, not only in a city but in every other place, it is impossible, except in cases of striking distress, to extend these affections beyond this circle with any warmth of individual regard. I allow that everywhere these active sympathies of the heart must be nearly bounded by this circle of exclusion ; so far the case is the same in a large and close population, and in a scattered and scanty one. In the one situation and the other, it is equally inevitable for the numbers on the outside of this circle of the affections to be held in comparative disregard. How then is this exclusiveness more contrary and injurious to philanthropy in the one situation than the other ?

For one consideration ; it appears to me a most unfortunate circumstance for philanthropy, when the disproportion between the number of persons to whom the heart can extend a definite sentiment of kindness, and of those to whom it cannot, is all but infinite, while they are yet all in the immediate neighborhood, and many thousands of them within perpetual observation. Amidst a scanty population, there is some evident proportion of number between these two divisions of human beings ; in a very thin population it might be considerable ; therefore there is some tolerable proportion between the measure of indifference and the measure of kindness which a man feels for the portion of humanity that is within his view ; which portion is to him practically the human race. In feeling a kind concern for a large proportion of the persons within this sphere, he approaches towards general benevolence, and is far removed from feeling a contempt for mankind. If he do not feel a friendly regard for a greater number of men than the inhabitant of a city does, yet a larger proportion of his feelings toward men are kind, because a far smaller number of men are at once seen, and yet consciously excluded from his benevolent concern. In a vast city the number of persons for whom a man can entertain any considerable degree of individual regard, compared to the immense number on the same spot to whom he is indifferent, appears almost nothing ; yet this most inconsiderable particle, excepted from the grand assemblage, is placed in opposition to the whole, and monopolizes the exercise of his affections. Thus the innumerable company

seems collected and placed to view on purpose to be slighted and despised. But I contend, that other things being equal, this must have a worse effect on benevolence and respect for man, than where a much smaller number of the race is constantly seen and disregarded. And again; in a great city this principle of exclusion not only operates against so vast a number as to be equivalent to a contempt and rejection of the collective human race, but it operates with a more positive repellency than in a different place. In a situation where the inhabitants are at moderate distances from one another, the multitude to whom it is inevitable for my heart to be comparatively indifferent being not *obvious* to me, being, perhaps, divided from me by brooks, or fields, or woods, the principle of exclusion is of a very quiescent nature. It does not need nor imply an anti-social precaution of the heart, not to extend my kind regard to objects that rarely come within my notice. In a populous city, on the contrary, as beings of my own great family press round me on all sides, and seem to reproach by their constant recurrence the selfish insulation and unconcern with which I am invested, it seems to require a harder array of heart, a more positive reaction, approaching to aversion, to preserve the indifference inviolate in this close and living vicinity. Either it requires this reaction to exclude the number of human beings that we meet, from the sympathy which we naturally feel for our kind, or in a great city the heart is delivered from the tendencies of this sympathy by its unavoidable extinction. Any way, the selfish principles must be more distinctly verified and kept in action, than where men are much more rare.

A large city certainly gives scope for the indulgence of the social disposition, by the facility of acquiring acquaintance, perhaps even friends. But I think you will have observed among friends in London less of that mutual affectionate dependence, which is one of the greatest charms of friendship, than where the facility of acquiring friends is less. There are too many resources at hand to allow the feelings, deportment, and conversation of one friend to become very deeply important to another. If a friend be alienated, it seems so easy to gain another, it seems so possible to advance an acquaintance into a friendship, and there are besides so many varieties and amusements to divert attention and occupy time, as preclude for the most part any severe anxiety respecting the disposition of an individual, unless a person of very unusual importance. Not to mention the numerous connexions and visits of mere routine, which have nothing at all to do with affection, I conjecture that the highest denomination which you will be inclined to give to the greatest number of what are called friendships in London is, *agreeable acquaintance*. Whilst each one amidst the crowds of London feels the insignificance of the individuals all around him, I have often wondered how much importance in respect to the rest each one is inclined to attribute to himself. It is tolerably certain, at least, that no man thinks himself of such small account as the rest regard him, if indeed they observe him at all. In the most transient

observance, or passing along one of the most frequented streets, you can perceive a great many self-important airs. You might often be tempted to ask, "What prince or princess can that be?" if you did not know what a magnificent person is *self* in all his forms. I suppose that whatever consequence a man knows himself to possess, or imagines that he ought to possess, in some little sphere of society or business, he is apt unconsciously to wear the air of that consequence in the face of the large world, identifying that world with the diminutive sphere in which he is regent. If therefore the tenor of his feelings were to be put into a short speech, it would be to each man he met, "Do you know who I am, Sir?" A man who has been frightening the inhabitants of two or three poor tenements, because they cannot pay him his rent, walks like a great lord, with the conscious importance derived from the difference between property and vassalage. A man who has been summoning his servants, to order and threaten them, comes forth with the authoritative aspect of commander-in-chief of an army. Nor can any senator carry along with him a clearer conviction that eloquence is the noblest of all human accomplishments, than the man who has just conquered his speechifying antagonist in a pot-house. One is apt to fancy, at least, that one perceives, in meeting the succession of faces, *who* is accustomed to be *somewhere* listened to, flattered, feared, obeyed, or opposed.

These are *unconscious* assertions of the importance which individuals carry about them, amidst the multitude that does not care for them. But the style of dress, houses, and equipage, is a direct appeal to this multitude respecting the importance of the exhibitors. For though the first object of this style may be to maintain what is accounted a respectability in that circle of acquaintance to which the exhibitor is personally known, yet there is a frequent recollection of the hundred thousand eyes which are to look attention, respect, inquiry, admiration, or envy. Is not this indeed a principal object of the rank itself? What would the gaudy exterior at least of the rank be worth, unless there were a great number of less bedecked mortals to pay the homage of inferiority?

You observe that the individuals who form the rank, or aspire to it, are, singly, richly endowed with its spirit and ostentation. But does it not strike you, that amidst so vast an aggregate of men there is a great miscalculation of the effect of individual display? In a poor country village, indeed, a brilliant beau, or a brilliant fair, would be a conspicuous and resplendent object; and would certainly obtain a comfortable sufficiency of the *devoirs* of gazing wonder. But what is this object in London? Out of this person's visiting company, who takes any notice of all this laborious and elegant parade? and what is the reward of all the care and expense deemed requisite to keep the exhibition fit to be seen?

If a man has his name on the door of a fine house, why, so are a thousand other names, which you may count in an hour, and find, when

you tell the last, that you have forgotten them all. But is it not very stupid of you not to recollect that Mr., or Dr., or Lord Such-a-one, claims your *respect* on the score of this fine house, and would deem it an immense degradation or misery to be reduced to inhabit a cottage like you? And what is a chariot with rich liveries, and fine horses, in London? It attracts not the slightest attention. You can any day see plenty such passing along a street, like bubbles along a brook; and so too, for what the passing spectators think or care, they might terminate their course.

The case, however, is not entirely hopeless. Let a man of wealth and vanity (if the laws of police allow it, or obtaining a dispensation if they do not) harness twelve or more horses to his chariot, and he will tower at once like a fire-balloon, above the insignificant level where he has been but a *common* gentleman till now. Perhaps he has at this very time so many horses in the stable, and the public never the wiser. It is only for him to bring forth his resources, and his *éclat* will not only pervade all parts of the metropolis, but will soon reach every part of the kingdom, and perhaps be wafted over Europe and across the Atlantic.

---

XLIV. TO MISS MARIA SNOOKE.

[On the Metropolis, No. III.]

March 22, 1803.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I suppose no man in the display of elegance and splendor has much solicitude to do honor to the other men that compose his rank, nor even to his particular friend. He could afford none of this virtuous expense of care and money for the sake of maintaining *their* importance in society. His own self, then, is the idol to be enshrined; and this interesting purpose is to be effected by a close resemblance to the style that prevails in his rank. But you would certainly wish so worthy a design to be accompanied by a more effectual method. As the object is to display the individual, the expedients employed ought, as much as possible, to distinguish the individual from his class, and from every social group where one is like another, and mark him with some original feature of *this* sublime; so that the whole wide public should soon come to recognize him, and each exclaim, "Here comes the man!"

But the present method of servile imitation throws the individual into the crowd of a numerous class—an undistinguished particle in the heap; as you often seen a company of brother oyster-shells lying in the street, but I dare say never thought of remarking the important differences among them; so too, I am afraid, you regard the little distinctions of one from another, of which many self-important persons are very vain. And probably just so the mass of mankind regards them, as they flaunt it a moment in passing, and then disappear. They must adopt something bolder.

If I were a man of rank, I would *not* be a man of rank. I would turn the means of the rank, that is to say, if I had the vanity of ostentation, into the distinctions of the individual. No matter that the expedients might be too fantastic to engage *respect*. One should think that at this late hour of the world's day and of human improvement, it is not *exactly* respect that any man can hope to command by the vain display of the present, or any exterior distinctions, which may be totally pure and separate from the smallest particle of virtue or sense.

It is very amusing to observe the captivity to the principle of imitation on so vast a scale as it is displayed in a great city. It prevails, not only in the department which I have just noticed, but in every other ; and, consequently, the varieties of manners and character are incomparably fewer than the number of men. You seldom meet with the bold, independent spirit, which, without asking leave of the sovereign modes and prescriptions of society, has formed its own habits, and without ostentation of singularity, can preserve them. What a scene for observation, if the inhabitants of a great city were as independent in habits as they are dissociated in affection ; and indeed it is somewhat strange that assimilation can be so extensive, while attachment is so restricted. But so it is, that each one seems anxious to be recognized as somebody, not in the designation of an individual, but in becoming an imperceptible component part of a bulk, by means of a servile conformity to the modes of general society, or to the modes prevalent in a large class. They are like the golden ornaments of the Israelites, which passed by a melting process from a multitude of diminutives into one illustrious calf.

The power of fashion, for instance, though it may be true that its authority to impose on its votaries a precise and perfect conformity in minutiae is lessening, would yet in London mould fifty thousand persons in conformity to its most fantastic model in ten days, each of them being convinced of the truth of the maxim, "Out of the fashion, out of life." And as to the other less general distinctions, society is thrown, if I may use the expression, into a few great *common-places*,—forms of life, not apparently so much intended to classify the men, as the men seem intended as materials to make up the forms, from each of which a few selections would give you a tolerable idea of the whole.

The illustrations will be obvious to you. What do you think for instance of the class whose habitual business is to walk about, to see and exhibit forms and draperies, and to kill time ? If similarity can secure reciprocal complacency, they will not quarrel. They might make use of one another for looking-glasses. No counterfeiter of signatures, stamps, or quack preparations, was ever more careful of resemblance.

I need not mention again in this reference, the routine, the parade, the luxury, and the artificial politeness of those who are eminent in wealth and distinction. I suppose a striking mutual conformity will be acknowledged to pervade the rank.

What do you say of the great number who are devoting the whole energy of their being to the acquisition of large fortunes? There are certainly more differences in this than in the former class; but yet, are not their habits, their diction, and their preference of topics, very characteristically, and very similarly tinged?

I have been told that even many of the literary men are too specifically marked by the distinctions of a class. It is said that their conversation has too much of the technical forms and subordinate details of literature, which ought to be merged and lost in the spirit of it; and that sometimes, what should be the dignified and various sense of cultivated and thinking men, is buried under a certain conceited slang that indicates a company of authors.

The middling people fall into several classes, being too numerous a body, and too much diversified by locality, by various degrees of distance from wealth and poverty, and by wide differences of accomplishment or vulgarity, to be harmonized into one class marked by uniform characteristics.

It is not indeed acknowledged as a class by many of the persons who compose it, who are not, like those who form the superior divisions of society, *rain* of it, and watchful to guard it with clear and jealous distinctions. You may observe a very prevalent wish to abdicate it, by the adoption as far as possible of the habits and distinctions of those whose means and state, however, defy their encroachment. The imitation too much resembles a string of boys, with paper helmets, and sticks for swords and muskets, mimicking "the pomp and circumstance of glorious war," in every place where a regiment of soldiers is stationed and paraded.

I need not remark on the points of resemblance among the lower order, that instantly everywhere refer the individual to his division. Perhaps the systematically wicked may, in each of their several classes, have a stronger principle of conformity, an assimilation approaching nearer to identity, than any other part of the inhabitants. I think it is observable, as a general fact, that though there are in the moral catalogue as many vices as virtues, and though human nature is prone to the worse, yet vicious character is not a very diversified thing. Here and there a depraved man of parts is able to expand the vicious character into latitude and variety; but the general operation of vice seems to be in a contrary direction; for while it degrades human faculties, it evidently contracts them to a narrower scope, and brings human beings the nearer together, the lower they sink, till at last they almost become one fetid, undistinguished element. In plain terms, there seem to be fewer obvious ways in which men can be bad, than in which they might be good. If we hear that a man is eminently vicious, we seem at once to know what his vices must be; but if we hear of a man being eminently good, we feel a greater choice and perplexity of conjecture. This is in consequence of our experience of the world having taught us, that vicious men are vicious

*like one another.* And I have no doubt that if twenty remarkably good men, and twenty men bad in the same degree, were to be selected, the one company would be found to display far more diversities of excellence, than the other of depravity. Who has not been struck, when thrown awhile by some of the casualties of life into a circle of depraved men, in observing the gross coincidence of taste, the similar diction, the small number of associations, and the constant recurrence of a few topics,—in a word, the confined scope of vice to which even their passionate love of vice would extend their faculties?

If vice be subject to this sameness when indulged with the freedom of inclination, it is much more likely to be so when practised as a mean of subsistence, and adjusted into a regular system. I should therefore expect to find the individuals of any one of the classes in London whose vice is their profession, to bear a mutual striking resemblance. Particularly there can be no chance for the growth of free natural varieties of manners and character among those men whose life is a dark seclusion from common human society, and whose combination is of the nature of a secret hostile empire under its foundations. The frequent occasions of deliberate concert, the necessity of deep and constant occupation in designs of one kind, the intense feeling that is kept alive in a system of daring and danger, and reflected among the associates; the consciousness, if they sometimes mingle in other society, that they are of another order, and that this order is the object of public fear and abhorrence; their peculiar diction, the suspicion and dislike that would instantly fix on any characteristic that should appear inharmonious with the spirit of the fraternity, and which might be deemed the omen of dissent or desertion, and the orgies in which alone they can give free scope to their social characters, and from which every being not connected with the order is excluded,—all these circumstances will tend to brand the marks of similarity on the whole connection, to dye their habits, if I may so speak, all of the same dark color, though there be some little difference of shades. Their characteristic sameness will be as great as the resemblance of countenances in a circle of gipsies round the dusky light of a midnight fire.

In London the ostensible classes of society (the last mentioned division keeps in the back ground of course) appear to an observer in great prominence and magnitude, from the numbers that compose them; and consequently they appear in striking contrast. Each class may seem to you like an ample representation of all the people of the same order, in the civilized world, stationed close by other masses which appear as specimens of the other great divisions. An image, therefore, of the great social divisions of Europe is before you; what are your sensations?

In contemplating the two extreme classes in respect to the great object of human solicitude—the accommodation of life, you must not, you cannot deem them to belong to the same race; as the symptoms of kindred that appear in their form, language, and wants, are so totally

contradicted by every other indication, except depravity. The prodigious contrast impresses a new spectator with inconceivable force in observing the scenes of the city, and incessantly prompts the question, How came the people that belong to two, into this barbarous mixture and vicinity, in a place that was only made for one part of them, and where the other exists by tolerance, like the ancient Gibeonites, on subjection and hard labor, and sometimes hardly even on this ?

You cannot assign them to a common nature ; for, if you should construct a system of morals, dignity, wants, and enjoyments, ever so completely adapted, as you had imagined, to the nature of man, you will find it inapplicable in every point. As to dignity, for instance,—if the dignity of the superior class consist, as all the world deems it to consist, in their exterior style, what does the dignity of the lower class consist in ? their vulgarity ? their poverty ? And as to wants—if one man, as he is called, want as much as fifty or a hundred others, which of these is the specimen of Man, and to which of them is your sapient system to be applied ? Apply it to which you will, you see it can take no account of the other. Or, if these opposites be, notwithstanding, both of the same family, it follows that man is a mere piece of material, created into actual character, of every diverse kind, by the caprice of circumstances. And whatever you may say or fancy about the equality of the race, it needs only a little civilization to make one of them look down from a tower, and the other to look up through a grate.

The parties themselves feel no relationship ; and if the one should pretend it, the other would spurn the claim. But the claim is not pretended ; people have learnt to know their place, and to look with reverence across the awful chasm that divides the region of grandeur from the region of baseness. Some similarity of condition is an almost indispensable medium for recognizing a kindred nature ; and a man of the lowest order is so indefinitely remote from this community of condition, that though he may look and see what there is in the world for *some* of the race,—if even in a dream of the night he were to be placed himself in the situation which he beholds every day,—his memory would record that dream as the most extravagant of his life.

And, on the other hand, do you not observe that those who hold the vantage ground in society rejoice in every event that increases, and are tenacious of every distinction that verifies and secures, the separation, and that nothing excites such terrible alarm as any circumstance that ever so distantly threatens an approximation ? A man who moves in affluence and splendor would be struck with horror at the idea of being himself placed in the precise condition to which he sees multitudes inevitably consigned ; but it is no matter of sorrow to him that *they* are in this condition ; and if he hear among them the slightest murmur at the enormous contrast, he would deem it nothing else than faction and wickedness ; but who, then, are *they* who are to be perfectly content and happy in the situation of which he would deem it insupportable to partake ? I repeat, they cannot belong to the same race.



You have often seen a miserable object lingering in the precincts of some of the abodes of grandeur. I have sometimes thought, that, speaking in the spirit of the present social order, one should be inclined to address him in some such manner as this: "I cannot conceive what business you can have in these sumptuous environs, consecrated to everything that you must never enjoy. Is it possible you can expect some recognition of human kindred between the inhabitants of these mansions and such an object as you? and that your looks of sadness shall touch compassion? Poor wretch! your ignorance deserves more pity than your wants. If you are *man*, these gaudy personages are something more, or something less. These children of magnificence have no respect for a nature which is seen degraded with poverty, and arrayed in rags: and no one can sympathize with what he despises. Pray take your sallow, emaciated form away, and die in some obscure recess, where there can be no chance of your disturbing a moment the enjoyments of luxury, or soiling the border of stately elegance. The death of many such beings as you would not be a circumstance deserving to becloud the gay felicity of so delicious a place."

---

XLV. TO MISS MARIA SNOOKER.

[On the Metropolis, No. IV.]

*Near Bristol, April 2, 1803.*

Do you think, my dear friend, that the representation of the contrast, in my last, is too aggravated? It certainly is most feeble, compared with the force of the impression which I have often felt in surveying the facts to which I refer.

But consult your own observations and feelings. The scene is before you. Observe the habitations of one of the divisions of society as you walk through some of the superb streets and squares; and then pass, by a transition which you may make in less than two minutes, into some of the disgusting lanes and alleys—the wretched abodes of which are much more crowded with human creatures than the sumptuous houses which you have just before seen. Compare next the dress, and whatever contributes to the commodious feeling, and the advantageous appearance of the person; including, on the one side, all the convenient or elegant vehicles for the facility of movement. The contrast is equally complete in the much more important article of sustenance, whether as to the means of obtaining it, its plenty, quality, or variety. The disproportion in this particular between the highest rank and the lowest, if they be both men, is inhuman and horrible.

Compare them in respect of the means of providing for their children, and of giving them some decent cultivation; as to convenience, attendance, and medical relief in the sad season of sickness; as to the means of preserving some little dignity appropriate to man in the ar-

rangements and intercourse of domestic society; and as to the possibility of indulging awhile in quiet and retirement, those tender sorrows for the dead which soften the heart, and are propitious to every virtue.

Much of the contrasted allotment can be seen in the most transient, superficial view of the exterior of life in London. In one morning's walk in this vast residence, you can pass through many of the divisions which exhibit such opposite conditions of human beings, that you will think they ought to be separated by an intervening space at least equal to one of the zones of the earth. Even the infinity of articles adapted to the commodiousness or decoration of life, which you see in the shops of any principal street, remind you of the vast number of persons who, passing close by these things every day, see them as far out of their reach as the moon or stars.

The indication of the wretchedness of the abject class will constantly meet you, though you do not seek for them. But there is among the poor in this magnificent city a world of miseries unapparent to the public, and which the strongest effort of your imagination can but faintly represent. One real, well selected instance, actually inspected, would probably excite more emotion than the gloomy, expanded image merely of the whole.

I have often thought and said, that it would be a most interesting undertaking for a man who should be rich enough to afford some little pecuniary relief in each case of distress which he found, to explore, through every part of London, all the retired scenes of misery caused by poverty, or attendant on it, to which he could introduce himself without serious danger, and even sometimes braving a degree of danger in the spirit of heroic philanthropy. Accompanied by some resolute friend, and fortified with every precaution against infection and violence, let him visit all the dark alleys and courts, the cellars and garrets, and procure admission by the tones of kindness to the dreary apartments of disease and famine.\* He might easily obtain access to any part of these melancholy abodes. The refinements which are cultivated in polished

\* "I am sorry not to have gained the knowledge which thirty or forty shillings would have purchased in London. At the expense of so much spent in charity, a person might have visited just once eight or ten of those sad retirements in darkness in dark alleys, where, in garrets and cellars, thousands of wretched families are dying of famine and disease. It would be most painful, however, to see these miseries without the power to supply any effectual relief. At the very same time you may see a succession which seems to have no end, of splendid mansions, equipages, liveries; you may scent the effluvia of preparing feasts; you may hear of fortunes, levees, preferments, pensions, corporation dinners, royal hunts, &c., &c., numerous beyond the devil's own arithmetic to calculate. This whole view of society might be called the devil's *play-bill*; for surely this world might be deemed a vast theatre, in which he, as manager, conducts the endless, horrible drama of laughing and suffering, while the diabolical satyrs of power, wealth and pride, are dancing round their dying victims;—a spectacle and an amusement for which the infernals will pay him liberal thanks."—*MS. Journal*, No. 452.

life, if they could ever have been acquired by the poor, would long since have vanished under the pressure of far more serious feelings; and the sacredness of sorrow, which dreads intrusive inspection, is no attendant on the victims of want and despair. Only he *must* have something to give, else he has no right to excite all the surprise and expectation which his visit will occasion, nor to ask an explanation of the sad circumstances which he beholds. Besides, if he have a heart, it will be impossible for him to endure a succession of such spectacles, if he must leave them still as hopeless as he finds them. He will not a second time inflict on himself the feeling which must be awakened as he retires from one such abode, amidst the last looks and expressions of disappointment and anguish.

He might in this manner take a personal view, in the course of a year, of many hundreds of most melancholy situations, of which the gay public takes no account. Let him then publish this whole assemblage of facts, in the simplest mode of statement, and, checking that eloquence of pity and indignation, of which the scenes that would be disclosed to such a man would be the unrivalled school, what a tragedy he would unfold, beyond all that poetry ever dreamed! Or, if he could *not* find many such situations, or if he could aver that the sufferers can redeem themselves from them if they choose, let him explicitly say so, and the compassionate part of the public will thank him for the information, that there exists less misery than they feared; and the splendid, selfish, and gay part of the public will welcome the assurance, that there are no claims on their sympathy which should divert their expenses and their cares from that style of life to which, however, they will not the less be *consecrated*, though these claims on sympathy be ever so real, and ever so numerous.

But, my dear friend, it cannot be a question with you, nor with any other serious inquirer, whether these scenes exist, with all their aggravations. And yet these dwellings are close in the neighborhood of sumptuous residences, where every real and every artificial want is indulged to satiety, and folly squanders what appetite cannot devour. Near these places, and sometimes directly by them, the procession of gay figures, and the parade of ostentatious exhibition, is passing all the day. . . .

In *civilisation*, too, as well as affluence, London is deemed to excel, and does perhaps excel every other city. But what, then, must the less civilized parts of the world be, if the statements respecting this city be true? Or what does *civilisation* consist in, or what is it worth, if its operation be not to ameliorate the general condition of a people, by reclaiming, as far as possible, the subordinate part of mankind from the debasement of vulgarity and ignorance, and to relieve them from misery,—and, on the other hand, to teach the superior classes that the want of condescension, humanity, and compassion, cannot be saved from final contempt by pomp and superciliousness?

Is not this, again, the supreme city of the world as a *Christian* city? Is not the religion of the Saviour of men, a religion of incomparable beneficence, extensively preached, believed, and loved? Yet the grand, essential spirit of that religion is to do all generous good, to visit the sick, feed the hungry, and clothe the naked, and to cure the despicable and cruel pride of worldly superiority. And can there be, then, where this sacred cause prevails, many thousands of abodes that are desolate, and hearts that are sad, for want of what *Christians*, in the same city, could easily impart to them?

I rejoice to believe that there is, in London, a large measure of sincere Christianity; but the whole mass of misery which might be relieved, and is not, shows you *what a measure there is not*; that is to say, if our Lord's prophetic description of the Last Judgment do really exhibit the great test of Christian character. But if the whole amount of that suffering which the affluent might remove, without reducing their enjoyments below a sober *Christian* estimate, be so much *crime*, is not the charge of very awful magnitude, however it may be divided, or wherever it may mainly fall? It appears to me of urgent and solemn importance to each of the rich people who make a particular profession of the religion of Christ, to be able to stand forth and say, "I am not guilty of this charge; on others be this sin, which will meet the strongest condemnation of the last day: all that an individual can do, I do." And can they, my dear friend, pronounce this deliberately and firmly, amidst that style of luxury and conformity to the world, in which you have had occasion to see that some of them indulge?

Among your observations on London, it will have occurred to you *how much familiarity with misery lessens pity*. One cause of this is, what I have mentioned before, the low value set on human beings where they are so immensely numerous. Where the beings themselves are regarded as insignificant things, of course their sufferings in general can excite but little interest. But, besides, perhaps no sentiment of the heart is more reluctant to a frequent or continual exercise than pity, except in regard to the distresses of some object that is singularly dear. The occasions that claim this feeling occur too often even in a place of moderate population, for each one of them to excite the degree of it which it seems to deserve; but, in London, a heart that could not become duly hardened under the repetition of impressions, would be persecuted to death. But the frequency destroys the effect. Fatal accidents, such as fires, persons being drowned in the river, or falling from scaffolds, or being crushed by carriages, are not so unusual as to connect any melancholy association with the place or the cause, or to haunt the spectators with a long mournful remembrance. The instant and continual intervention, too, of things which make an opposite impression, diverts the sad feeling away. The scene where any melancholy catastrophe happens, has not the sedateness and quiet which, by presenting but this one object, enables it to absorb all the thought and feeling in fixed musing. If a man fall down dead in the street, he is taken away, and perhaps in

ten minutes after a showman, with dancing bears and monkeys, comes and excites merriment on the very same spot. Or, if no ludicrous spectacle be presented, yet the constant buzz, and noise, and activity, tend most effectually to obliterate every sad impression. The confused mixture and rapid succession of all kinds of events and sights, inevitable in a great city, where the same day is appointed for weddings and funerals, balls and executions, gives no distinct, protracted space for reflection to rest on any of them. Those, among the rest, that seem adapted to awaken and cherish pity, have their moment, and are gone.

The number of wretched spectacles in human form which everywhere meet the sight, would at first excite, in a cultivated and humane mind, a mixture of pity and horror. The first momentary promptings of benevolence would be to attempt something to relieve them; and when the number instantly proved that to be hopeless to an individual, he would feel a painful, shrinking repugnance to meet them, or pass anywhere near them; he would, from humanity, do that which the Levite did from the want of it, "pass by on the other side." But you observe, that after these spectacles have been familiarized by frequency and time, even humane persons can pass them almost without perceiving that they are there; or with a feeling of more disgust than compassion if they do perceive them.

The number of *beggars* who, in every part of the city, look you in the face, and bespeak your notice with humble attitudes and tones of sorrow, have a destructive effect on the disposition to pity. There is the same reason why you should give to many as to one, and yet you cannot give to them all. You must therefore content yourself as you can, to see several thousands of your race depend, for what you know, this day, for a morsel of bread and for life, on the casual trifle that may be given them, or may not; and learn to look on the features of misery, and hear the language of supplication with perfect indifference. For a person of feeling this is a great achievement; and therefore it is found requisite to fortify the heart against the class of indications naturally adopted to awaken pity, by a recollection of all the instances and stories of the imposition and roguery of this unfortunate class of persons, and to hold a steady persuasion that the greatest number that appear, and consequently each one in the succession, are cheats, who would play on compassion by the false semblance of distress; and this persuasion you must not the less retain, though you see the evident proofs of old age, debility, or withered famine. This complacency of indifference is so completely possessed by the greatest number of those who pass, that you will observe them smile at your simplicity if you take any particular notice of any of these forlorn objects. No one doubts that there are a great number of cheats, but you have only to open your eyes to be convinced that very many are suffering objects; and it cannot be too often repeated, that the habit of thus looking on misery, without pity, is most baneful to the heart. Who can tell how far into the whole system of the benevolent affections the noxious effect may extend?

Compassion for the suffering of the animal tribes is likely to be greatly injured in London, by the constant sight of the condition and treatment of horses, particularly those of the hackney coaches, and of the stage coaches from the villages and towns in the neighborhood of the city. . . . You have seen these ill-fated creatures, old, blind, ill-fed, wounded by the harness, and panting for life, yet suffering all the execrable barbarity of wretches in the form of men, but with the spirit and language of hell. . . . This is a bad world for whatever is innocent and useful, if it be defenceless too. This spectacle is continually witnessed, and deemed too trivial for feeling or abhorrence, except in some singularly atrocious instances. Introduce the topic, if you please, in a polished company, and see how many persons will attach the smallest importance to a consideration which appears so interesting to humanity. I have known the whole subject turned into ridicule by persons whom I had not, till then, deemed altogether destitute of feeling. This insensibility to obvious and multiplied animal suffering, must surely be the result of familiarly seeing it. But a city residence ought to make no trifling compensation to the qualities of the heart, in some other way, for such a serious deduction from its capability of feeling compassion. Let it be considered, too, that the same cause early produces the same insensibility in the minds of children: how different a process from the discipline requisite to produce that anxious and sacred tenderness to feeling, that fear of hurting what has life, which a completely thoughtful and humane parent would be solicitous to cultivate in the young mind in precedence to every other moral principle, inasmuch as cruelty is the most hateful of all the possible forms of depravity.

. . . . I have taken no notice till now of what appears to me the most melancholy of all the circumstances of a great city—the number of unfortunate females. The greater number of these persons were originally capable of all the kind and dignified social sympathies, of the sweet charities of domestic life; and what is their present condition, sunk in the most degrading forms of vice, and the most unpitied forms of misery—thrown off with aversion from the society and affections of their own sex, and the alternate allurements and contempt of the other? What a contamination and destruction of all the sensibilities that can make human beings interesting to one another! . . . .

. . . . My dear friend, you will be tired with this extended and incessant invective. If you think it extravagant, you must allow me to plead that I am but a savage, a mere simple savage; I might have quitted but three months since the American wilds, so little can I comprehend the system of an European city, where all human improvements are deemed to have attained the most elevated pitch that the world ever saw. I may in due time obtain the perceptions of wise, civilized men, and cordially adopt the consolatory creed which, if they are at ease themselves, I observe they zealously maintain, in spite of all the miseries around them, viz. *that things are just as they should be*. That time, however, I am afraid is remote.

## CHAPTER IV.

REMOVAL TO FROME—PUBLICATION OF THE ESSAYS—ECLECTIC REVIEW—MARRIAGE.

1804—1808.

MR. FOSTER had resided about four years at Downend, when, in consequence chiefly of the high testimony borne to his character and abilities by Mr. Hall, he was invited to become the minister of a congregation meeting in Sheppard's Barton, Frome. He removed thither in February, 1804. "It is a new place," he tells Mrs. Mant, "from which I write to you. And what place is this Frome? you will say, and how came you to be there? My good friend, Frome is a large and surpassing ugly town in Somersetshire, where the greatest number of the people are employed about making woollen cloth;—where there are several meeting-houses, and among the rest one where a Mr. Job David was a long time the preacher. This place he left some time since, after avowing himself a Socinian, which he had for some time been partly thought, but had not avowed himself to be. The congregation was nearly reduced to nothing before he left it. To this situation I was some time since invited, and was induced, from several considerations, to accede to the invitation. I am now considered as settled here. Among these considerations, undoubtedly one was, some advantage in respect of pecuniary means. But the difference in this respect is not such as to have been a strong inducement, if there had not been other considerations concerned. I have experienced the greatest kindness at Downend, and left my friends there with regret; a sentiment which I believe I caused as well as felt." To another friend (Mrs. Gowing of Downend) he says, "I experience much more kindness here than my social, or rather unsocial dispositions deserve; and more than I should experience if those dispositions were fully known. You will not suppose me foolish enough to tell them all. I often make myself quite a social man; and if I do this you know, and perform the social duties, nobody has a right to complain. It is not, however, by going very often into society that I evince my-

self a social man, but behaving with decency when I *am* in it. To do this, is but the very lowest degree of propriety certainly, and especially when some of the persons I am sometimes with, are persons of sense and great worth. I avow to you, I wish I were much less monkish, and much less in danger of sometimes approaching to misanthropy. To the family in whose house I am, I behave, I assure you, with great propriety, and give them but little trouble. I spend with them but extremely little time beyond inevitable occasions; and I dare say they are mistaken enough to suppose me one of the most studious men on earth. I never think of fairly sitting down for a conversation, nor even think of introducing any of those topics that have so often kept us up in your disorderly house till twelve or one o'clock. No, we are sober people here, and having taken our supper, go to bed, at least vanish from one another's sight. They are very worthy people, and good natured; and to me they are even more than sufficiently attentive. They have a fine boy about nine months old, that sometimes amuses me very much. They are young people in Wesley's connection, keep a school, and have some property independently. The house is large; so that I feel no inconvenience at all from the school. I sleep in a small chamber, the very room in which Mrs. Rowe died; and have for my studying (if I ever did or could study) a room that was added to the house not many years since,—an exceedingly spacious room, with a rural prospect before it, but not comparable to the horizon seen from your windows. In this I pass the greatest part of my time; for I scarcely ever take any walks, not oftener at any rate than once in several weeks; though there are at the distance of a mile or two some very pretty scenes, in the form of narrow valleys, and sometimes rocks on each side.

“The congregation here is still small, though not quite so small as at first. In the evening, generally, there are as many as would make a pretty good congregation for the meeting at Downend, but the size of the meeting makes these appear but few. I have not yet attained, nor probably ever shall (from the loftiness of the house I suppose it may be), the power of talking away with that rapid facility that I had sometimes at Downend. I am obliged to speak more slowly, and that makes me speak more in one set manner, and deprives me of those variations of manner which accompany a talking style of preaching. I am likewise obliged to take somewhat more previous pains with my sermons,



as I cannot so well trust myself to the resources of the moment. In consequence of this I seldom make a sermon quite so bad as I sometimes did in your neighborhood; though I doubt on the other hand whether I have ever made one so good as some of the most successful of those you have heard. My greatest difficulty is to feel the influence of religion in my own mind, a sufficient degree of which would inspire in public a zeal and energy that would easily triumph over a few difficulties, and most of all over that barren, uninterested coldness which I so often feel and deplore. My dear friend, to cultivate individual Christianity is, and probably ever will be, the greatest of all our difficulties. Do you not find it so? With a full measure of this religion in the heart, half the gloomy feelings of life would vanish; for the prospect of its end would be divinely animating, and all the cares of the course would be alleviated by a habitual trust in Providence, and a solid assurance of all dispensations and temporary evils tending and conducing towards final and infinite felicity. Let us then resolve to make more vigorous and constant efforts to obtain a large augmentation of this internal, this infinite and never-failing consolation. This is the only kind of labor, experience and reflection continually tell us, of which the result is infallible and infinitely estimable. Be this then our earnest care. If this concern go right, nothing else will long be suffered to go wrong. The shortness of this vain life, if it is *thus* employed, will be the grandest consolation. And this sacred possibility of making the shortness of life a felicity, is so much the more welcome that there is nothing I have yet found, or expect to find, that can make long life deserve to be esteemed a felicity."

It was during his residence at Frome that the "Essays," by which Foster attained his great celebrity, were published. They appear to have originated in his conversations with the interesting friend (afterwards Mrs. Foster) to whom they were addressed, while on a visit to her brother-in-law, the late Dr. Joseph Mason Cox, of Overn. "In our many conversations while you were here," Foster observes, in a letter designed to be introductory to the Essays,\* "it could not fail to occur to us, by what a vast

\* "It will not seem a very natural manner of commencing a course of letters to a friend, to enter formally on a subject, in the first sentence. In excuse for this abruptness, it may be mentioned, that an introductory letter went before that which appears first in the series; but as it was written in the presumption that a considerable variety of subjects would be treated in the compass of a moderate number of letters, it is omitted, as being

world of subjects for consideration we are surrounded. Any glance into the distance in quest of a limit, found no limit to the diffused and endless multitude of subjects, though it would soon find one to the power of investigating and understanding them. . . . In these letters I shall revive some of the subjects which engaged and interested the social hour, and shall perhaps recall some of the hints or views that there presented themselves, in order to display them with greater amplitude and precision."

In writing to Mrs. Mant from Frome (June 20, 1804), Foster says, "I have confined myself very much, for many months past, about literary business, in which I expect to be confined for months and years to come, should life be prolonged. Having been idle almost all my life, I am at last become diligent, which I hope I shall continue to be, the remainder of it. I hope to be always constrained to it by a sense of duty; at present the want of that same *metal*, which I have lost all hope, at last, of gaining, by the discoveries of dreaming, is an additional stimulus. One part of this labor has been about a volume which I have written, and am sending in two or three weeks to be printed; from which, however, I do not expect much pecuniary advantage, as being a first production of a quite unknown person. If, however, the first should be successful (a very uncertain experiment), I may produce more, and the second will have a better chance, if the writer have gained any notice by the first. The first volume will, I suppose, be several months in printing. It is on a very few subjects, partly moral, partly philosophical (as it is now the fashion to call so many things), and partly religious. The writing is not without some merit, at least in parts; though I can easily imagine to myself something better done, incomparably, and though no reader will probably see more clearly where and what the faults are, than I shall myself. . . . I think I have not a great deal of vanity, that is, the love of praise. I feel I have some of it, and there is nothing that excites, when I reflect, more self-contempt than this feeling. To seek the praise that comes from God only, is the true nobleness of character: and if the solicitude to obtain this praise were thoroughly established in the soul, all human notice would sink into insignificance, and vanish

less adapted to precede what is executed in a manner so different from the design."—*Advertisement to the first edition of the Essays*, p. vi. This letter the Editor has the satisfaction of inserting entire in the correspondence

from regard, except as a good man might consistently wish for the favor of men, in order to influence those men to what is good, by means of their opinion of him ; or again, as it may be very correct to wish to gain the applauding feelings of a few dear friends and connexions, in order to secure more completely their *affectionate* feelings."

In his next letter to the same correspondent (April 25, 1805), he explains the cause of the delay in the publication of the work. "When I wrote to you last, I believe I told you I had completed a task of authorship on which I had been employed a year or two before. What a fool I was, even so lately as when I told you this. I had, it is true, written more than enough for a considerable volume, but I had not begun to revise and correct it in order to write it for the press. When I began this work, and had proceeded a little way, I found I had a job on my hands, with a vengeance. To my astonishment and vexation, I found there was not a paragraph, and scarcely a sentence, that did not want mending, and sometimes that whole pages could not be mended, but must be burnt, and something new written in their stead. This was often a most irksome and toilsome business, much more so than the first writing. On the whole, I verily believe the revision and new modelling of the job has cost quite as much mental exertion as the original writing of it. In this business I have been employed ever since the time that I wrote to you, and that was last summer, till very lately. This exercise has, however, been a most excellent lesson in composition, so that I shall in the next instance do better the first time, and therefore never have again such a long and irksome task. This task is finished a little while since, and I am now presenting myself to the public."

Before the manuscript was sent to the press, the author submitted it to the critical judgment of his friend Mr. Hughes. "I like," he says, "the method and distinctness of your remarks. It is needless, I suppose, to observe, that freedom and even severity on your part, and obstinacy on mine, are to be held entirely warranted and innocent. As to the doubt which you express, whether you shall be entirely obsequious, I do not know how much it implies ; but certainly I should myself, in this same case, feel the duty of an absolute practical obsequiousness, however my own opinion might differ, except in the case of some obvious inadvortency, and this I believe will rarely occur in my manuscript,

since the care has been very great. I am glad of your remarks not the less, and am certain, independently of examining them, of profiting by many of them. I would make one remark once for all, viz. that when a man has written so much as to have formed his style, it will have a certain *homogeneity*, from which it will result that the substitution of different forms of expression will not always be an improvement, even when they are better in themselves, since they may not be of a piece."

On the publication of the work, Mr. Hughes, by his personal exertions, circulated nearly one-fifth of the whole edition. He presented copies to Mr. Wilberforce, Lord Teignmouth, and other persons of note and influence. "Horne Tooke has your volumes," he tells Mr. Foster. "I went over to make him a helper. He is considerably an approver. He says, 'Let him simplify; there is a basis of good sense. If he is a young writer he will do.' I requested him to mention the publication: he will." In about four months a second edition was called for. "The degree of success," Foster remarks, "is indeed very unusual. I trust it is a direct favor and interposition of Providence, both for public utility and personal happiness. It will have been preceded and accompanied by numberless supplications of great sincerity and earnestness; a very principal part of which have been employed to ask for more of the spirit that would devoutly and benevolently wish to do good. I feel and lament a great deficiency in this point; but I am not content to do no more than feel and lament it."\*

The autumn, and the greater part of the winter, were devoted to a careful revision of the Essays; of which he gives the following account to a friend at Downend. "I have been excessively busy this, and many past days. If you ask, Busy about what? I answer, Mending and botching up bad sentences, paragraphs, and pages. That book that I published had at least five thousand faults; and two or three thousand I have felt it necessary to try and mend. Many of them I have certainly mended; but perhaps in some places I have made new faults in trying to correct the old. The book will be in substance the very same; but very many pages, and a multitude of single sentences will be very different. Many sentences are left out, and many others put into so different a form, that they will not appear the same, even as to

\* To Mr. Hughes, Sept. 3, 1805.

the idea. One great advantage I believe will be, that there will be much fewer obscure passages ; you will feel that you understand more clearly than in reading the first edition. When I began correcting, I intended to alter but little, as I was not completely aware that great alterations were necessary ; and as I did not wish any proprietor of the first edition to feel as if it were gone out of date in consequence of the new one ; but when I went in earnest into the examination, I was confounded by meeting such an immense crowd of faults. I found that I must dismiss all delicacy respecting the first edition, and alter everything without ceremony. A great many needless words, and some that were too fine, have been sent about their business. Many long sentences are made shorter ; many imperfect arguments are made fuller and clearer. The pages will have somewhat more thought, and somewhat less show. Several figures are dismissed. The connexion of thought is made somewhat more close and clear. There will not, however, be any such effect produced as to lead any reader to guess at the degree of labor which it has cost. This labor is not yet finished, nor will be, for at least a month. I shall have hard work every day for so long. About that time I expect the printing to be finished ;—it is advanced a considerable way into the second volume. . . . Two or three reviews have praised the book ; one of them a good deal beyond its merits. But besides a number of magazines, there are at least half a dozen reviews to come, from not more than one or two of which I can expect much favor. I have written to the principal ones to mention that a second edition will soon be printed, and tell them that if they are disposed to be liberal, they will review *that* instead of the first, unless their arrangements are already fixed. It is not improbable that this may be the case with one or two of them, and therefore I shall receive a public whipping, a week and two three days hence. If none of them mention me at that time, I shall be pleased ; as I shall then reckon on their waiting till I shall appear before them in a better dress. But, however, *that* will not save me from the severe whipping, or else the contemptuous slight, of the greater number of them. I shall open each of them in succession as I receive them, with this expectation ; excepting, as I have said, one or two, from which I have some cause to expect a politer treatment. Hughes, however, tells me that as far as he can judge, I may on the whole bid them defiance, for that the volumes have excited so much attention that they will, in some

degree, make way for themselves. The review which I mentioned as having praised too much, though at the same time it by no means omits to censure, was written by Mr. Hall. What a melancholy circumstance it is that he should at this time be your neighbor for such a cause. Every recollection of this gives me a feeling of gloomy regret. We had hoped that the calamity might never have returned; but now, if he should recover, the threatening omens will always hang over him. It is a most mysterious dispensation that so strong and sublime a spirit should be thus humiliated. You often hear about him, it is probable, and no doubt the splendor of his mind often breaks out through the shade that surrounds it. I hope he will yet be all himself again, and enjoy at least intervals of life free from this affliction. What a very, very deplorable thing it is that he has not written a great number of volumes; I never think of this without extreme regret; he would then have instructed and delighted to the end of time, even though his intellectual career had now been closed."

To Mr. Hall's review of the Essays he again adverts in writing to Mr. Hughes. "I have read this critique on J. F. It has an odd effect to see a name one is so familiar with, connected with public notices, praises, &c. I am glad the editor did change such an expression as you mention originally to have been in the critique. A number of the expressions, as they now appear, will probably be deemed extravagant by most readers of the Essays, who may see also these remarks. I have here an occasion of verifying that vanity is not the predominant vice of my mind. These praises give me but very little elation, nor would they if they had been less qualified with accompanying censure than they are. The idea that circulated commendation will assist to *sell* the work, and so may contribute towards an object which cannot be attained without—money—is far, very far, more gratifying than any mere consideration of literary distinction. I would barter all the fame of Buonaparte, if I had it, for the possession to-morrow of that more interesting object. But I am not unsolicitous to feel the influence of a higher motive still; at the same time I can see that I shall not probably have any great share of fame to barter. If the most partial of the public critics so strongly marks faults, what will be done by the mean, the prejudiced, the dull, or the spiteful? His remarks on faults of composition are most pointed and discriminative. I have had myself the clearest perception of such things as they discriminate, in correcting for

the second edition ; to which I cannot but be confident these very just remarks will be very much less applicable. . . . The whole of this critique has all the acuteness and fire of its author. My thoughts have not yet had time to concentrate into any precise opinion on his remarks respecting theological diction. I have a pure certainty as a matter of fact that what I have advanced respecting the effect of this diction is true, whatever qualifying considerations ought to accompany the statement. What is said about Scripture language must be unfortunate, for Hall has totally mistaken me. I have expressly said that 'the more the sacred oracles are quoted, if appropriately, the better.' What I mean, is a barbarous mixture of Scripture phrases into the constitution of the language ; not a frequent insertion of passages standing distinct in the page, in the same manner as I have myself introduced them. Evidently there would be a vast difference between trying to weave the phrases of Milton or Shakspeare, for instance, into the texture of my own diction, and citing clear, distinct expressions from them which should obviously appear foreign, and forming no part of my own mode of expression, though pertinently, or perhaps strikingly introduced in the places where they stand."

A third edition of the *Essays* was published in the summer of 1806. It contained a very few small alterations ; and the author tells Mrs. Mant, "I have no idea of making any farther alterations or additions, in case another edition should ever be wanted. The third may therefore be considered as correct and perfect as I am able to make it."

In writing to Mr. Hughes (August 20, 1805), Foster says, "I am now beginning an *Essay on the Improvement of Time*, for which I have thrown together a large quantity of rude materials, and which I foresee cannot be finished in less than a moderate volume. The subject suits me much, and I hope, if well, I may be able to finish it by the end of the year." He appears to have labored upon this essay at intervals during the two following years, and at last to have abandoned it, in consequence of his becoming a regular contributor to the *Eclectic Review*. So fully was he occupied in this department of literature, that upwards of thirteen years elapsed before he again appeared before the public in his own name.

But to return to Mr. Foster's personal history. Some time before his settlement at Frome, a morbid state of the thyroid

gland had made its appearance. It was so much aggravated by the exertion of speaking in public, that in May, 1805, he said, "I am strongly apprehensive that a short time longer will put an end to my preaching, by means of a swelling of a gland of the neck. It began two or three years since, and has been progressive in spite of every remedy." In a letter of rather later date he tells Mrs. Mant, "Every month makes me more and more certain that I shall preach but a very short time longer. The progressive complaint of my neck will, I am persuaded and certain, in a few months more, silence me for ever. After that I must depend on writing; and I am afraid it will be some time before I can in that way secure an income equal to that which I shall lose. As soon as I shall feel a tolerable certainty of this, I may trust to attain that social state which I so much long for. My prospects in this way are not those of actual despondency."

In a letter to Dr. Ryland, written not long before he resigned the pastoral office, he describes the condition and character of the congregation, and gives some account of his own circumstances and prospects. "I write to you," he says, "at the request of the people to whom I yet venture to preach. The physical cause which I have so long complained of, compels me entirely and finally to relinquish the work. I ought to have done so a considerable time since; but have been withheld by a reluctance to lay down an office which I can take up no more. I may perhaps endeavor to preach three months longer, but that must be the utmost: and that will only be, after two or three weeks, once a day.

"The people therefore have desired me to request, in their name, that you will have the goodness to mention whether you know of any person likely to be useful in such a situation as this, and also likely to be willing to undertake it. They desire me also to state such circumstances as are requisite, of course, to be known respecting the situation, which they say I could with more propriety than they could themselves. This, however, involves some difficulty. I need not say that the society has acquired, by means of Mr. David, an unfortunate character among the churches; and this, in the public estimation, can never be entirely reversed while it really consists of the same persons. The character, however, is in a great measure unjust. There are I believe two or three persons belonging in some sense to the society, who are of Mr. David's school; but the principal of these,



Mr. G——, the blind man, never attends, nor ever would attend or long trouble any minister inclined to Calvinism. As to the society taken collectively, there is a total disapprobation of anything like an approach to Socinianism. Some of them I believe are Trinitarians, in the common and simple sense; and some are a kind of Sabellians, not materially different from Dr. Watts, for instance. In regard to predestinarian opinions, I believe Baxterian would be the most appropriate and comprehensive term. A very mild, moderate Calvinist would not displease them. At the same time no preacher would suit that was not rather a practical than a doctrinal preacher; nor would a boisterous manner be by any means acceptable. The society is extremely small, and a number of the most respectable individuals are far advanced in years, and therefore not likely to remain a great while in any terrestrial society. The church is too reduced in number to form anything like a congregation; and to gain one will be a matter of great difficulty. The unfavorable theological reputation of the church will be one great obstacle; for people are afraid to join it, and serious persons are commonly most inclined to hear where they think they could be happy to become members of the church. A zealous man of good sense, and understood to be substantially sound, might have a tolerable congregation, but ought not to begin reckoning on a large one. The people say they would greatly prefer a minister of some standing to a quite young, inexperienced man. . . . It does not seem necessary to describe the circumstances more minutely. . . . If you can suggest anything on the subject, it will be thankfully received by the people here, and also by me, as I cannot but be concerned for their welfare, having a great respect for some of them, and having experienced the utmost degree of kindness and respect among them.

“I received your letter, and also one from Mr. Pope. I cannot but entertain the highest respect for the [Bristol] Tract Society and for its object; to which I shall be glad, if I shall find it in my power, to contribute. I am sincerely sorry to express myself in a manner so little positive, and wish I could more perfectly avoid anything that may for a moment look like the cold calculation of selfishness. But my circumstances are changed; writing will become, in a few months, my sole resource for subsistence; it is an employment in which, as yet, I am inconceivably slow, and have even had experience enough to be certain

that I shall always be so. I am entering on a plan of systematic reading besides, as necessary to an author, and which will occupy much of my time; and on the whole I am not yet certain that I shall be able to produce works, or to gain wages, beyond the indispensable claims of self-interest. I really am extremely mortified to answer in such a manner to a request which has the best kind of usefulness for its object. If I were not so slow—beyond all comparison slow—even when I make my utmost efforts in the business of composition, the case would be different. But this is really the case; and you would be surprised, if I were to tell you, what a length of time and labor it cost me to write any given part of the small volumes already printed; or if I were to tell you how many months have been consumed in the mere revision and correction of those volumes for a second edition.

“What I may hereafter write will be directly or indirectly subservient to the best cause; and if I find that I can but sufficiently make out in the way of trade, I shall be very glad to meet next the claims of Christian benevolence. How the trade is likely to serve I shall partly be able to judge in a short time, the second edition of the *Essays* being within about a week of coming from the press. When you see Mr. Pope, will you, my dear sir, tell him with what a cordial promptitude I could wish to answer his application, and how much I wish I could have stated the circumstances of my present studies in terms less liable to the charge of cold self-interest.

“I rejoice to hear that your health continues, and that your labors are prosperous. I read with pleasure your sermon on the death of Mr. Sharp. May you still proceed in your various and important work with the animation both of present success and of the final hopes. . . . I suppose Mr. Hall is now in Bristol. Does he ever intend to write anything? He will have been one of the greatest sinners of his time if he do not.”

Mr. Foster resigned his ministerial charge at Midsummer, 1806. The greater part of the ensuing four months was spent at Battersea and Margate. “A preacher instead of me,” he says,\* “is now settled at Frome. I was very sorry, on various accounts, to surrender the situation, but I found myself compelled to do so. Since ceasing to preach the complaint is become much less troublesome; indeed it is hardly so at all, but I certainly

\* To Mrs. Mant, Oct. 7, 1806.

believe I should soon feel just in the same way again if I were again regularly to preach. The cause is not at all removed ; though the pain has ceased with the discontinuance of the exercise, the swelling is not in the smallest degree lessened."

On his return to Frome he applied with great assiduity to his new literary engagement. His first critical essay was a review of "Carr's Stranger in Ireland," which appeared in the *Eclectic* for November and December, 1806. The reviewer possessed the advantage of having witnessed many of the scenes described, and of having observed with benevolent interest the condition and character of the people.

"It will be obvious," he remarks, "to the readers of this volume, that the Irish people have a national character widely different from that of the English. And it will be the utmost want of candor, we think, to deny that they are equal to any nation on the earth, in point of both physical and intellectual capability. A liberal system of government, and a high state of mental cultivation, would make them the Athenians of the British empire. By what mystery of iniquity or infatuation of policy has it come to pass, that they have been doomed to unalterable ignorance, poverty, and misery, and reminded one age after another of their dependence on a Protestant power, sometimes by disdainful neglect, and sometimes by the infliction of plagues. The temper of our traveller is totally the reverse of anything like querulousness or faction ; but he occasionally avows, both in sorrow and in anger, the irresistible impressions made by what he witnessed, on an honest, and we believe we may say, generous mind. He clearly sees that the lower order of the people, whatever might be their disposition, have in the present state of things absolutely no power to redeem themselves from their deplorable degradation. Without some great and as yet unattempted and perhaps unprojected plan for the relief of their pressing physical wants, they may remain another century in a situation which a Christian and a philanthropist cannot contemplate without a grief approaching to horror. Their popery and their vice will be alleged against them ; if the punishment is to be, that they shall be left in that condition wherein they will inevitably continue popish and vicious still, their fate is indeed mournful, vengeance would hardly prompt a severer retribution. . . . It is not by tempting the conscience of the papist with a pitiful sum of money, nor by forcibly interrupting the follies of his public worship, nor by making him, for the sake of his religion, the subject of continual derision, nor by unnecessarily excluding him from any advantage, that we could wish to see genuine Christianity aided, in its warfare against that wretched paganism into which what was once religion is found degenerated among all very ignorant papists in every country. We cannot but regret that both the civil and ecclesiastical rulers of Ireland should have

been for the most part unacquainted with all apostolical methods of attempting the conversion of the Catholics. And it is melancholy that the *generality* of the ostensible ministers of religion at present in that country, should be so very little either disposed or qualified to promote this great work. We happen to know that there are *some* brilliant exceptions to this remark; the lustre of whose character, if it cannot prevail to any distance, yet defines and exposes the obscurity which surrounds them."

In conclusion, he observes:—

"A number of pages are occupied with passages from Mr. Grattan's speeches; some of which extracts we believe were supplied to Mr. Carr from memory, and therefore are probably given imperfectly. On the whole, however, these passages tend to confirm the general idea entertained of Mr. Grattan's eloquence, as distinguished by fire, sublimity, and an immense reach of thought. A following chapter is chiefly composed of similar extracts from Mr. Curran's speeches, in most of which the conceptions are expressed with more lucidness and precision than in the passages from Grattan. These specimens did not surprise, though they delighted us. We have long considered this distinguished counsellor as possessed of a higher genius than any one in his profession within the British empire. The most obvious difference between these two great orators is, that Curran is more versatile, rising often to sublimity, and often descending to pleasantry, and even drollery; whereas Grattan is always grave and austere. They both possess that order of intellectual powers, of which the limits cannot be assigned. No conception could be so brilliant and original that we should confidently pronounce that neither of these men could have uttered it. We regret to imagine how many admirable thoughts which such men must have expressed, in the lapse of many years, have been unrecorded and lost for ever. We think of them with the same feelings with which we have often read of the beautiful or sublime occasional phenomena of nature, in past times or remote regions, which amazed and delighted the beholders, but which we were destined never to see."\*

In the following year (1807) he contributed thirteen articles to the same journal. He was now entirely dependent on his literary exertions, and necessitated to defer that domestic union of which he indulged brighter anticipations than either the habitual pensiveness of his mind, or the results of his observation, might have been supposed to permit. The event, however, amply justified his prognostications. "Though sufficiently old and reflective,"

\* Vide Contributions, Biographical, Literary and Philosophical, to the Eclectic Review. Vol. i., pp. 8, 9, 11, 17, 18.

he says, "not to be desperately romantic, I do indulge anticipations of a much more Elysian character that it would be philosophic to avow. In as sober a judgment as I can form, there are more points of congeniality than in any instance I have ever seen; and some of them, by being of a high and unusual order, will produce a sympathy of so much richer quality, and more vivid emphasis."\* To his friend at Chichester he writes, "I am still all alone; and since I wrote to you have lived a more solitary life than ever in my life before. This last six months I have lived a little way out of the town, in a house amidst the fields—into which fields, however, I hardly ever go, because I can see them so well through my window, the window of an upper room. I hardly ever what can be called take a walk, except merely in the garden adjoining the house. The beauties of nature are brought so directly under my eyes and to my feet, that I am rarely prompted to go in quest of them, even as far as from your house to the top of Wick Lane. Excepting my journey to Bristol, I have hardly ever taken a good long walk for the last nine months. If this rigid limitation were imposed upon me by some external authority, by the will of somebody else than myself, what a wretched prisoner I should think myself, and should watch day and night for an opportunity to make my escape. I almost decline all visiting, and have not dined from home, I believe, six times these last seven months. The family consists only of a worthy man and his worthy wife, with a little servant girl, and with them I pass only the time necessary for meals. You will wonder, I suppose, that I have not acquired one constant companion,—and you may wonder—but so it is, however. It is not that I do not sometimes feel this complete solitude oppressive, though indeed I have constant business on my hands, which does not allow much of my day-time to be spent in tedious vacancy. I am become, from necessity perhaps, more than any other cause, more diligent than when you knew me. Having ceased to preach, I have not a penny but what is gained by hard work. A large share of my work, since I wrote to you last, has consisted in reviewing books, which I have found a very laborious business, but also highly improving. . . . Perhaps I mentioned a book about the Improvement of Time that I began to write a good while since; this is still far enough from being finished, but it must, if possible, in four or five months

\* To Mr. Hughes, Oct. 24, 1807.

more. When it is printed I shall not fail to have a copy sent to you. I am very glad the other book I sent you afforded you any pleasure. With the public it has been much more successful than I had ever ventured to expect. This solitude, however, which is at present my lot, is not likely to last very long. A house is at length taken for me and my intended companion at Bourton, the village in the upper part of Gloucestershire, where she lives. But it cannot be quitted by the present occupant till next Christmas, and then the getting of furniture, and the making of some slight repairs, will occupy at least a month, and therefore defer so long the expected union. It is only within a short time past that we have had the slightest idea of being at Bourton, and I was looking out for a house in this neighborhood, though with little hope of finding just such a one as I wanted. A suitable house offering at Bourton, and M.'s mother and sisters wishing us to live there, I with pleasure acceded to the plan. I am particularly glad of it for her sake, for she would have come here (to Frome) a perfect stranger to every individual. . . . Not that we shall want, or seek, or choose much society, but a very few female friends are desirable for a woman, and there are none she loves so much as her sisters. I, too, have always liked them most cordially. And I like the village, which is in a pretty situation, and inhabited, for the most part, by a decent, good kind of people. Next week I am going there, but only to stay about a week. It will be indispensable, I believe, for me to make another visit also, and return, before I go to remain there, and be made happy. Thus you see, after long, long waiting, my prospects with regard to this subject are converging to a point, and that point comparatively not very distant, if no unforeseen prevention shall interfere to blast them, or protract their accomplishment. I certainly anticipate very much felicity, but I do not forget that I am in a world where a great deal of evil and sorrow *must*, absolutely *must*, by the appointment of the wise Creator, and by the very nature of things, mingle in the cup of life. I do not forget that the grand essence of happiness must invariably consist in the enjoyment of the divine fervor and the conscious preparation for another life, and that the value of the other sources of felicity will, on the whole, depend on their being combined with this supreme requisite. The dear and inestimable friend to whom I expect to be united, feels this conviction not less solemnly than myself; and we mutually hope that the complacency of affection will be

heightened and perpetuated by a mutual, zealous cultivation of piety and moral and intellectual improvement. We are thoroughly well acquainted with each other's character, tastes, and habits; and both of us believe there is a singular, even an extraordinary degree of mutual adaptation, in all our views, feelings, and wishes. Perhaps I might have mentioned that my dear friend is about six years younger than myself. Two months hence I shall be thirty-seven years of age. . . . Our acquaintance has now been as much as seven years, and our avowed connection about five. I regret that the union has been, though unavoidably, deferred to so advanced a period of life, but I never wish I had been married very young. My general health is very good. The state of my eyes is not worse, nor the complaint which has compelled me to desist from preaching."

About two months before his marriage, he says, "It would be a foolish stoicism if I did not meet the snowdrops, and other signs and approaches of *this* spring, with a degree of interest which has never accompanied any former vernal equinox. I expect to leave this place in less than two weeks, which, however, I should not do so soon but for the necessity of decamping from this house, my host being obliged immediately to leave it. A few days will be spent in Bath with P., &c., and then I go forward, if all is well, to Bourton, to reside there perhaps a month, or perhaps more, chiefly in one room of the appointed habitation, before my beloved companion can be united to me to reside in it also. I do feel very grateful to Heaven for the combination of valuable things which I hope for in this appropriation. Her conscience, intellect, and tenderness, are the chief. In her society and co-operation I do indulge a sanguine hope of improving, in every respect, by a much more quick and pleasing progression than I have done in a given space during all these past years of gloomy solitude. . . . For a long time, however, I must be at a great expense for books, of which my stock is miserably deficient. There are innumerable things incessantly which I have occasion to want to know, but have no means of informing myself; and this will be felt as much at Bourton, while we may stay there, as it is here, from its distance from any great mart of knowledge."\*

\* To Mr. Hughes, Feb. 15, 1808.

## LETTERS.

XLVI. TO MRS. GOWING.

*Frome, Feb., 1804.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,— . . . I reached here in safety, but with feelings very far from anything like cheerfulness. The pensiveness caused by leaving Downend, uniting with the consciousness of no very favorable prospects here, made me gloomy. I was received, as I expected, with kindness by the family in which I spent the time of my previous visit, and in which I still am, without any certainty as yet how soon or into what house I shall remove my residence. It is a respectable family, and each of the persons in it is very kind; one of them is the very superior young man that you heard me mention; he is to take this letter. There is some expectation of my lodging in the house in which Mrs. Rowe lived and died, in which I wish I may not be disappointed, as it is in a very convenient situation: if I had a little superstition, I should be interested in the house on her account; but I am too old to be strongly susceptible of a feeling of this kind.

I probably expressed to you that no very sanguine prospects attended my removal hither. Nothing can be more dreary than a large lofty meeting-house with a very small handful of hearers, who are never likely to become much more numerous. Some fatal destiny seems to have decreed that I am not to be anywhere of much use as a public speaker, nor perhaps indeed in any other capacity. It required all the force that I felt in the reasons which induced me to leave Downend, to determine me to fix in a situation like this.

I left your house with great regret, and shall always feel an animated pleasure in seeing you again. Your habitual and extreme kindness can never be lost to my memory, nor the recollection of the immense number of animated conversations that we have held on so many subjects. Some of those subjects I hope we shall discuss yet again. . . . These are very gloomy times, and there is too little reason to hope for any speedy amendment. But no times and no successes would exempt reflective minds from feeling a fatal deficiency in all the resources under the sun. It is only the anticipation of a superior state, that can save life in any circumstances from deserving to be called wretched. . . .

XLVII. TO MRS. MANT.

*Frome, June 20, 1804*

. . . I have no expectation of finding here any friends equally interesting as those that I have found in former times, nor do I wish to replace



the former by new ones if I could. As to that other most interesting person on whom so much of my happiness depends, I am yet far enough from having appropriated her as a domestic associate ; nor can any divinations within my power to use, inform me or you when such an event will take place. It might soon perhaps be accomplished if I were to dream of some spot where one of the great pots full of old pieces of gold had been hidden and lost for centuries ; and then were to go to the marked place in the night, and after digging several hours near the old tree or under the old wall, should strike at last on the crock which contains the dear omnipotent dust. A little of this material I want, not at all for the sake of satisfying any desires of vanity or pride, in the one individual or the other, but just for the sake of necessary use, since these are very bad times you know : that abominable vermin called *taxes*, a far more mischievous creature than the locusts of Egypt, eating up every green thing, and every other thing of every other color. I do hope, however, that the time may not be very far distant when even in spite of this voracious breed, I may hope to reap a little harvest of the sweetest kind of felicity.

. . . . I fear you may be again the victim of that grievous head-ache, which will render a season of so much beauty a season of unmingled melancholy. I should be very glad to know, that this is not the case ; but that the brilliance of the morning, and the solemnity of the evening, the beauties of the field, and the songs of the grove, bring you their whole tribute of luxury, which tribute they bring only to health. If you are again oppressed with illness, you need other consolations than all the visible creation can impart ! and most happily, my friend, it is not now the first time that you have had recourse to those superior consolations, the efficacy of which you have found capable of alleviating the heaviest griefs, and which you know it is not in vain to seek. The Being that gives beauty to the earth and grandeur to the sky, is well able to sustain those souls that are more estimable in his regard than the whole material creation. To that Being there is ready access at every moment, and one short pathetic supplication to him will be of more value to the mind than all the rhapsodies that the enthusiasts of nature ever uttered, and the reveries that poets ever dreamed. If, however, you are in tolerable health, you are unpardonable, if you do not sometimes, as often as possible, regale yourself with rural sweetness. This I say with emphasis, though I have myself scarcely taken a walk this month, except as part of a journey that I was lately obliged to make. . . . I was interested and amused by some of the articles of intelligence which you gave me. . . . As to that spiritless dog, John S——, I have lost all hope of him, if he have not by this time accomplished his business. Perhaps, however, I may be mistaken ; he may be proceeding most regularly with measured steps to his purpose, having begun the undertaking on a calculation that by waiting on the lady an hour and a half or so, each Christmas-day, the great achievement might be accomplished

in *thirty years*. Patience, then, my good friend S., for twenty-five years more, and you shall be the happiest fellow in Sussex. There's nothing like your steady rogues, that can follow a purpose for fifty years at a beat. I was something very like sorry to hear that Mr. R., notwithstanding all his merits and sacrifices, is finally excluded from the band of gentle warriors. Really when a worthy old man has set his heart on some interest, that is not absolutely bad, though it be foolish for him to pursue it, one is sorry when he is disappointed. I was pleased to hear that your old servant Dolly was married; it looks like a kind of *safety* for the character of a wild girl. One has, however, I think seldom known a composition less likely to make a respectable wife than she. So little sense and so much caprice will be a pleasant mess for her good owner, whoever it be that has caught this piece of good fortune. I wonder if she is still pretty; *that* very likely did the business.

---

XLVIII. TO MISS MARIA SNOOKE.

[Introductory Letter to the Essays.\*]

*Near Bristol, August 30, 1804.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,—You will accept my most sincere acknowledgments for the allowance you have given me. I shall prove how far I am sensible of its value, by the ample and frequent use I shall make of it.

The coldness and languor incident to solitary speculation will be relieved by the half-social spirit supplied by the constant recollection, that I am writing to a reflective friend, to whom no sentiment of importance can come without its interest, and from whom a little power of imagination will seem to draw intermingled remarks and replies.

My mind, I am fully conscious, cannot do justice to any subject; but yet it does appear extremely possible, in such a series of letters as I have engaged to write, to suggest many thoughts not altogether common, and adapted, on their correct application, to produce a considerable effect on taste, on character, and on happiness.

In our many conversations while you were here, it could not fail to occur to us, by what a vast world of subjects for consideration we are surrounded. Any glance into the distance in quest of a limit, found no limit to the diffused and endless multitude of subjects, though it would soon find one to the power of investigating and understanding them.

It appeared that all things in the creation are marked with some kind of characters, which attention may decipher into truth—pervaded by some kind of element, which thought may draw out into instruction. Amidst these various views it could not fail often to occur to us, how many exercises of the judgment are absolutely necessary to secure the attainments which form even a tolerably accomplished human being. In

\* Vide page 179.

these letters I shall revive some of the subjects which engaged and interested the social hour, and shall perhaps recall some of the hints or views that then presented themselves, in order to display them with greater amplitude and precision. And any topics on which I have or have not thought before, will be introduced, just as my mind may be in the disposition to select them, or as casualty or observation may suggest them.

For myself, I hope to gain by this course of writing some advantage in respect of intellectual discipline. A little studious labor will indeed be amply repaid, if it will assist to reclaim my mind from its inveterate and unfortunate habits of indolent, desultory, musing vagrancy, into something like method in its operations, and conclusiveness in their results. If this reformation cannot be effected now, I may justly despair of its ever being possible. But I am determined not, without an effort, to surrender my mind finally to the state of a garden which produces a few scattered flowers, only to make one regret its being irretrievably abandoned to weeds.

Another advantage may be, that I shall be compelled to make, or rather to *admit*, an estimate of what has really been gained from observation on a world which I have *seen* so long, and from the various lessons of experience. This will be to find, if I may express it so, the amount of the annual value, to the mind, of this mortal routine of rising each morning to view again the scenes of nature, to mingle and talk with various society, to transact accustomed business, to notice the occurrences of a little, or the events of a larger sphere, to read books, to observe the manners and disclosures of character among persons around, and ever and anon to turn attention on one's self.

It might be presumed that much would be taught by all these diversities, to an attentive and diligent spirit, formed to be the pupil of its situation, and not of a temper to yield either its character in obsequious conformity to the scene it inhabits, or its faculties to that thoughtless slumber which perceives none of the views that present instruction, but as the visions of a dream.

My friend, *to have thought far too little*, we shall find among the capital faults in the review of life. To have in our nature a noble part that can think would be a cause for infinite exultation, if it actually did think as much and as well as it can think, and if to have an unthinking mind were not equivalent to having no mind at all. The mind might, and it should be, kept in a state of habitual exertion, that would save us from needing to appeal for proof of its existence to some occasion yesterday when we did think, or to-morrow when we shall.

As to myself, I have often been severely mortified in considering, if all the short spaces of time in which I have strongly exerted my faculties could be ascertained, and reckoned together into one place, what a small part of life it would fill. The space, however, may be deemed the measure of the total of *real* life.

We can recollect, that often, while the hour has been passing, an internal, faintly-accusing consciousness has said, "This is not reflection." "This is not reasoning." "This is vacancy." Often, on looking back on a day or a week, we can mark out large portions in which life was of no use—in other words, was nothing worth—because the mind did nothing, and gained nothing; notwithstanding that the while the pulsation of the blood and all the vital functions of the *animal* life went on; notwithstanding that the dial noted the rapid hours, the sun rose and set, the grand volume of truth was expanded before us, and the great operations of nature held their uncontrollable course.

It was impossible not to regret that the power most made for action and advance, the power apparently adapted to run a race with any orb in the sky, should be so immensely left behind. And it was difficult to avoid the folly of wishing that the soul, too, were under some grand law of necessitated exertion and inevitable improvement.

I remember when once, many years ago, musing in reflective indolence, observing the vigorous vegetation of some shrubs and plants in spring, I wished that the powers of the mind too could not help growing in the same spontaneous manner. But this vain wish instantly gave place to the recollected sober conviction, that there is a simple and practicable process which would as certainly be followed by the high improvements of reason, as the vegetable luxury follows the genial warmth and showers of spring. If all our wishes for important acquirements had become *efforts*, my friend! if all those spaces of time, that have been left free from the claims of other employment, had been spent in such a determined exercise of our faculties, as we recollect to have sustained at a few particular seasons, how much more correct, acute, ample, and rich, they would at this time have been!

When the period of what is called *education* was past, and the important responsibility of the conduct of life devolved on ourselves, we did not imagine that the labors and solitudes of mental and moral cultivation had accomplished all their objects, and might now be dismissed to final repose. How fertile in everything wise and useful would be that life, the early part of which should be the sole reservoir to supply opinions and virtues to all the rest.

The condition of humanity will not afford a wise and happy life on such terms. Life itself will go on gratuitously and without our care; but all that can give value to its progress, or dignity to its close, must be obtained at the heavy expense of unintermitted labor.

Judicious education anxiously displays to its pupils its own insufficiency and confined scope, and tells them that this whole earth can be but a place of tuition, till it become either a depopulated ruin, or an Elysium of perfect and happy beings. Its object is to qualify them for entering with advantage into the greater school where the whole of life is to be spent, and its last emphatic lesson is to enforce the necessity of an ever-watchful discipline, which must be imposed by each individual *self*, when

exempted from all external authority. The privileges, the hazards, and the accountableness of this maturity of life, and the consignment to one's self, make it an interesting situation. It is to be entrusted with the care of a being infinitely dear, whose destiny is yet unknown, whose faculties are not fully expanded, whose interests we but dimly ascertain, whose happiness we may throw away, and whose animation we had rather indulge to revel than train to labor.

There is a feeling in looking round like the first man in Eden, on a sphere that is *my own*, on which no human authority may intrude, and bounded only by the laws of Him who commands the universe. What luxury of existence, if there were no duties, and no dangers !

But meanwhile the process of education is going on, even though unobserved, and tending fast toward the ultimate fixed form of character. Character grows with a force that operates every moment ; it were as easy to check the growth of a forest. You find, that to counteract any one of its determined tendencies, is a task of hard and recurring labor. Even its slightest propensity, when opposed, seems inspirited with the energy of the whole.

Habits are growing very fast ; some of them may not be good ; but they still grow while we speculate on them, and will soon close, like the ices from the opposite shores in the Arctic seas, except dashed by the interruption of a mighty force. Is the spectator unconcerned while they are closing around him ? Or is he descanting wisely on the *laws* of habit, till he becomes its victim ? The mind is a traitor to itself ; it will not wait while we are seeking wise principles, nor return when we have found them.

Everything is education ;—the trains of thought you are indulging this hour ; the society in which you will spend the evening ; the conversations, walks, and incidents of to-morrow. And so it ought to be ; we may thank the world for its infinite means of impression and excitement, which keep our faculties awake and in action, while it is *our* important office to preside over that action, and guide it to some divine result.

I wish, my dear friend, to animate both myself and you to the utmost zeal respecting this high concern. As the education of our youth could give us only some faint impressions and rude elements of wisdom,—as we have since found that no great and estimable improvement will spring unsolicited or flourish uncultivated,—and as we perceive that the world, and life, and time, *will* mould us whether we will or not, if left to their influence, it is supremely worth our care that we be not fatally and irretrievably spoiled.

There are scattered, here and there, many energetic spirits, who compel the world and all things in it, to pay them tribute. They deserve to be rich : would they could impart a small portion of their treasures ! or the power of acquiring them. But I have often been struck at considering how entirely individual are all estimable attainments. The man into

whose house I step a quarter of an hour, or whom I meet on the road, or whose hand I take, and converse with him, looking in his face the while—he so near me, that walks with me, that traverses a field or sits in an arbor with me,—he may have a soul fraught with celestial fire, stores of science, brilliant ideas, magnanimous principles, while I—I that observe his countenance and hear him talk—may have nothing of all this. He may for the last ten years have been assiduous in studies day and night, while I have consumed the morning in sleep, and the day in indolent vacancy of every sentiment, except *wishing*, “which of all employments is the worst.” What right have I to wish he should leave part of his animated and powerful character with me? But he cannot, if he would. He takes his resplendent soul away, and leaves me to feel, that as *he* is individual, so, too, unfortunately, am I. The mind must operate within its own self, and by its own will; else, though surrounded by a legion of angels, it would be dark and stationary still.

Yet, though designs and efforts must be individual, they may be social; and it is one of the most pleasing engagements of friendship to offer suggestions tending to assist such generous cares. I would not wish to hold a friendship that I greatly prized at less expense than this.

I shall feel the most animated pleasure in my solitude, if in these letters I can assemble from the regions of reflection, or of reality, into which I have wandered, any sentiments which may hereafter be recollected by you, as having contributed to any one of your pleasures, or of your improvements. It is not at all in the character of an *instructor* that I write, but as a cordial, respectful friend, certain always to find in the friend to whom he writes an animated rival interest in everything that can enlighten understanding, or conduce to felicity.

I am, most sincerely yours,

J. F.

XLIX. TO THE REV. JOSEPH HUGHES.

*Frome, March, 1805.*

MY DEAR FRIEND— . . . I was afraid to open your letter, lest some savage beast or serpent should dart out of it, and thought it vastly mild when I *did* venture to examine it. I wish you whatever domestic gratification is derivable from the addition of a son.

. . . I am glad to hear a confirmation of the account of Mr. Hall's recovery. As to his writing, it does not seem more likely he will attempt it now than before; it is even probable he will be rather dissuaded from too much of the solitude and hard study which that business requires; that is to say, if other authors are at all like *me*. Your censures about the delay of my manuscript are totally misplaced; it is true, I have been twice, part of a week each time, at Downend; but thus much you would allow that even propriety, had inclination not been a compe-

tent inducement, would have claimed. As to the rest of the time I have been very industrious, but I did not know when I had finished the two first essays what a task I had yet on my hands. When I came to the fourth essay, which is much longer and more important (as far as the word important can apply to any of them) than the others, I found it requisite to write the first part of it anew, and at five times the length; besides, the whole business is inconceivably tedious. I have often passed the whole day about two or three sentences, and could only determine to do more to-morrow; but I could not help myself; it was no affair of will. I have been so assiduous that I have hardly had one walk, except the journeys to Downend, for these several months; and though I have been necessitated, often against my inclination, to make visits in the town, I have put off a number of persons from time to time with saying, "Certainly, Sir, I intend myself the pleasure of calling on you very shortly." Everything was wrong in these two essays; there were scarcely three pardonable sentences together. This has given me a mingled feeling of being pleased and mortified; mortified that the first operations of thought were so incorrect, but pleased that I could clearly see and often mend the faults. The latter essays will exhibit more of the work of understanding, and more of what will please or displease as matter of opinion. As to how soon they will be finished I am afraid to pledge myself, after my past experience of the utter impossibility of moving fast; but as I have only about half a dozen sheets to transcribe, with very slight corrections, I cannot be many days; I am afraid somewhat more than a week, but surely I think not two. . . .

I see no manner of reason why you should forswear the press. How many editions would you have your works go through? By all means write again; that is, after you have learnt of me somewhat more simplicity of style. You may believe me, that I am quite worthy to be a model in this respect.

. . . . Do you think we really *shall* do anything of permanence and of consequence before we quit this orb? There is nothing proceeding in this stupid town worth notice. I lately felt high elation in looking to an immense distance from it, that is, at Sirius, and some others of the sublime spectacles, in a glass of considerable power.

I was sorry you did not come to Bath last autumn. It is but thirteen miles from Frome. You would be treated very respectfully here, only you would be severely preached. After the preachers, who are extremely respectable men, there are very few persons here in whom I can feel any particular interest. . . . I should nauseate the place if I had been habituated to it a century. At first I felt an intense loathing; I hated every house, timber, stone, and brick in the town, and almost the very trees, fields, and flowers, in the country round. I have, indeed, long since lost all attachment to this world as a locality, and shall never regain it. Neither, indeed, for this do I care; we shall soon leave it for ever. . . . I now seldom comparatively think of politics; when I do,

it is with a hatred of the prevailing system, which becomes but more intense by time.

---

L. TO THE REV. JOSEPH HUGHES.

*Downend, March 26, 1805.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,— . . . . It was necessary for me to come here this week, if I would see the person on whose account I came. I am very glad also for the sake of my eyes, which were become very uneasy by the exertion of the mind perhaps, as much as direct use. I have now nothing to write but unconnected notices. First, I have admitted I think two thirds of your corrections, a very large proportion you will allow, for the vanity of an author. . . . . I have made a very few corrections also; one very necessary and very happy one, about the beginning of the part referring to atheism. As the passage stood before, it connected the idea of Deity with *place*, in a manner which I had felt to disapprove before, but on considering again, I felt absolutely must be altered. A considerable number of the modes of expression I have restored to the state in which they had stood before. I have erased most of the marks of quotation, used where I had supposed the sentiment to be expressed by some individual; they are ugly and foolish; and by observing lately the usage of a distinguished writer, I perceive them quite useless. I have erased also several notes of admiration which you had introduced; I hate this figure mortally, and prohibit most absolutely the insertion of one of them more than the very few which I felt indispensable.

. . . . I perceive one mistake in your manner of *pointing* (that is, according to the standard of Gibbon, and some other of the highest authorities). When there are several nouns of the nominative case to one verb, you admit no comma after the last of these previous to the verb. Or when there are several distinct, short members converging into one concluding one, you admit no stop between the last of them and this concluding one. In this I am persuaded you are wrong, according to the dictates of reason, as well as the highest authority. Of the *authority* I am quite certain. A passage or two where you have introduced the correction will show you what I mean. "New train of ideas, presenting the possible, and magnifying the certain, difficulties of the situation." "Though a man is obedient, and probably will continue obedient, to habit." "They are mistaken if they imagine that the influences which guide, or the moral principles which impel, this self-applauding process," &c. Now I feel most certain that the comma ought to remain in all such cases, and that the contrary manner is a vulgar mode only of pointing. The authority of Gibbon is decisive, and he invariably points, in such instances, as I have done.

There is another circumstance which I cannot now describe grammatically, but of which I sent an instance. I wrote, "Any man, whatever were his original tendencies, might, by *being led* through a different



train, have been now a different man from what he is." You put it thus: "Whatever his original tendencies, might, by his *having been* led," &c. Now in such cases, I think you will perceive, if you consider, that two past tenses are an incorrect mode of expression. When one past time is indicated, the other thing which was contemporary with the time indicated by that past tense was of course *present* as to that time, and ought therefore to be in the form used for present time. This, however, is not a good example. I much dislike the article *an* before a word beginning with *u*, as *an universe*. I do not know whether I am right in this, but I nauseate the full broad pronunciation of *u* as *you*. I cannot recollect to give account of the reasons for retaining my former mode of expression in places where you had modified it, but I should not have done it from the mere vanity of retaining *my own*. I have excluded Cæsar, whom you introduced among such men as "Alfred, Timoleon," &c. It was my object in that one instance to have them all men of *virtue*. I retain the appellation "My dear friend," at the beginning of the fourth letter of one of the two first essays. I meant it not as an *address*; it had then been a singularity from the beginning of the other letters, but merely an appellation to stand in the commencing line, and not above it. . . . I saw your meaning in altering somewhere a simile about *meteors*, but I instantly recurred to the former state of the comparison. It was indispensable to have it not formal and lengthened, but momentary and gone. . . . Somewhere in the fourth essay I have made an assertion respecting the original of the New Testament of this kind, that the terms which are now in our language *peculiarly* theological, were not so, as adopted by the apostles, but that they took their words from the simple, general vocabulary of the language. I do not express it right here; but it is a distinctly expressed idea in the essay. Now, though I have no doubt of this being *true*, you know how well qualified I am to *prove* it so. If it is not true (of which you will be able to judge), it can be omitted without making a violent chasm. If it is true, it is a remark of considerable consequence in the question I am then considering. I have said, "sublimates martial into moral grandeur;" I do not know whether *sublimate* is exclusively a scientific word. I have used in one place, in the fourth essay, "lustre of array," as synonymous to *raiment*; perhaps this is wrong. . . . I have not one book of reference about me. I have not had an English dictionary of any kind whatever during the whole of my revision. I had somewhere used the word *partly* in connection with "divine grace," or the "divine Spirit's *transforming* a man." I wonder at your erasing this. Surely it is time of day to take care what we assert on this subject. It is impossible not to see that the transformation is *very* partial, even in the best men. I think I must trust to your discretion any slight correction in the two latter essays. The care I have used assures me they can need to be very small, unless it were in the ideas, and that is another thing. . . .

## LI. TO THE REV. JOSEPH HUGHES.

*Frome, April 8, 1805*

. . . . I left the correcting of the two latter essays to your discretion; I have since thought I should not have done this absolutely, as there are many sentences which you might be inclined to modify, on account of their meaning, in a manner which I could not approve. I request you, therefore, if any corrections of consequence have occurred to you, to write them, together with the expressions as they stand independently of the correction, and send them to me. I am sorry for every addition to your trouble, but it will not take much time. You may think this one of the mean feelings of an author, but in the same case, yourself the author and I the corrector, you would have the same wish. Having a manuscript by me (I wish for the proof that I have been *sometime* laborious, that you could see this manuscript) I shall instantly be able to refer the detached expressions or sentences to their place, so as to judge of their connections. . . . What should you deem to be the reasonable auguries as to public success? It is an experiment of great anxiety to me, from my progressive apprehension that the pen will soon be my only resource. Unless, therefore, I am successful in this trial, my prospects of life are turning again into darkness.

I am completely satisfied with myself as to the laborious care which I have employed. I fully feel that unless this volume be written well, I *cannot* write well. But, indeed, I am also certain that in many respects it is written well.

I am very glad, not that indolence has so long kept me from being an author, but glad of the fact of having not become an author sooner. A more advantageous impression will be made by the first production of so mature a character, than I should probably have made by a progressive improvement to the present intellectual pitch from such an inferior commencement as I should have made, even six or seven years since. I am gratified in feeling that my mind was reserved, either in consequence of something in its essential constitution, or from the defectiveness of its early discipline, for a late—a very late maturity. It is yet progressive; if I shall live six or ten years, and can compel myself to a rigorous, especially if to a *scientific*, discipline, I am certain it will *think* much better than it does now; though in the faculty of invention it has probably almost reached its limit.

My total want of all knowledge of intellectual philosophy, and of all metaphysical reading, I exceedingly deplore. Whatever of this kind appears in these letters is from my own observation and reflection, much more than from any other resource. But everything belonging to abstraction has cost me inconceivable labor; and many passages which even now may appear not very perspicuous, or not, perhaps, even true, are the fourth or fifth labored form of the ideas. I like my mind for its *necessity* of seeking the abstraction of every subject; but, at the same

time, this is, without more knowledge and discipline, extremely inconvenient, and sometimes the work is done very awkwardly or erroneously. How little a reader can do justice to the labors of an author, unless himself also were an author! How often I have spent the whole day in adjusting two or three sentences amidst a perplexity about niceties, which would be far too impalpable to be even comprehended, if one were to state them, by the greatest number of readers. Neither is the reader aware how often, after this has been done, the sentences or paragraphs so adjusted were, after several hours' deliberation the next day, all blotted out. The labor of months lies in this discarded state in the manuscripts, which I shall burn when I know that the volume is all printed. Less of this kind of loss, however, would be sustained in making another volume; the long revision which I have now finished having given me a most excellent set of lessons on composition, in consequence of which I should much better execute the *first* writing, in the case of producing other works. You will forgive this egotism; none of it appears in the book.

I must protest against all alteration of words, on account only of their being of similar sound to words in their vicinity, except in the case of a very apparent inadvertency. This is a very puerile kind of objection and criticism.

---

#### LII. TO THE REV. JOSEPH HUGHES.

*Frome, April 20, and May 8, 1805.*

. . . . I have said, "Again, what is the value of all interesting moral books, but as instructing you in the true doctrine of happiness?" You would say, "Wherein consists the value of all interesting moral books, but in their capacity to instruct you?" &c. Both of us bad. "Wherein," is one of that class of adverbial compounds which is discarded by every elegant pen, and expressly condemned by Blair (there are *whereby*, *whereof*, *whereto*, *thereof*, &c.); I am not aware that I have admitted one of this class throughout the essays. "*Consists*." It is one of my laws of composition always to prefer the simple verbs, *is*, *does*, *makes*, &c., to any more formal words, when they will express the sense as well; and this is one of the chief secrets of *simple* writing. "*Capacity*," is not the word; capacity belongs more to a *conscious* agent. I have spent and wasted several hours on this insignificant sentence. There is no need of anything about "value." Write simply "again, moral writings are instructions on the subject of happiness. Now the doctrine of this subject is declared," &c. The plainest simplicity is always necessary in a sentence which proposes a topic.

I have said, "Your recollections will tell you that they have most certainly presumed to avow, or to insinuate, a doctrine of happiness which implies the Christian doctrine to be a needless intruder on our specula-

tions," &c. You question the authority of *implies* with an infinitive mood after it. Since it is *grammatically* correct, and a very neat, quick way of getting out the meaning, I should venture it if there were *no* authority. But there is authority. I probably never use it in this manner without either a distinct recollection, or a kind of faint echo, of a sentence in a long printed speech, in my possession, of *Fox*; a speech to which Mr. Favell told me, that Horne Tooke said, he had hardly deemed even *Fox* to be equal. "Excellent illustration! Why, in such a case we should all have said the same thing; but what stupidity it is to *imply this to be such a case!*" (It is not a *newspaper* speech.)

. . . . I have written, "And what appears in these illustrations, as the highest form\* of happiness? It is probably that of a man feeling an elevated complacency in his own excellence, a proud consciousness of rectitude," &c. I have attentively considered this sentence, and do not approve any alteration in it; it expresses just what I wanted to express. I can by no means approve making the form or kind of happiness, to be *the man himself* who possesses it; nor the introduction of the word "cherishing," or any word, before the expression, "a proud consciousness of rectitude," so as to separate this from the preceding expression, "an elevated complacency in his own excellence;" it would be absurd to describe these as two distinct circumstances of the man's feelings. The latter is but a varied expression, an aggravation, an explanation, or whatever you please, of the former. The propriety of admitting this sort of repetition is supported by numberless examples in Johnson and many others; particularly Hall abounds with them. The sentence would be more absolutely correct thus; "It is probably the *state of mind* of a man feeling," &c. But this would be unpardonably clumsy, and the point of correctness is here of trivial importance.

I have said, "To shade from sight that vista which opens *into* the distance of eternity." Incorrect; as it would seem to say that the termination of the vista is actually in the scene of the distance. It will be perfectly, or *sufficiently*, correct, to say, "opens *to* the distance of eternity." The expression, "the distance," as used by an artist, does not mean the measure of space from this point to some distant one, but the scene or region which is distant. "Vastness" has nothing to do with my meaning; nor could "vastness" be seen through a vista. "Distant eternity" will not do, because *distance* is the chief thing I have in view, as opposed to the confinement of all our attention to immediate objects. "Better country, the heavenly," expresses no idea of distance; has been used not many pages before, and would here be a very heavy, lazy, far-fetched, broken, ending of the sentence; "opens to the distance of eternity," will, when connected with vista, instantaneously and simply give the right idea to every mind.

. . . . I have said, "Have not the most enlightened and devout Chris-

\* "Brightest image," 9th edition.

tians, meeting death in their chambers, and the men who have publicly died for the best cause," &c. You say, "Have not the most enlightened and devout Christians, whether they have languished in their chambers, or have been consumed at the stake, disclosed their elevation?" and very much better, if this *stake*, a most odious word every way, and never to be tolerated except in narrative, could be got out. I would infinitely rather be a little rhetorical and say, "whether they have languished in their chambers, or passed through the fire of martyrdom, disclosed," &c. Indeed *consumed* is too passive a word; the expression should be one that indicates agency on the part of the glorious victim. I think it is the best as I have now expressed it. . . .

. . . . "This number is small indeed compared with, &c., but it is large enough to occupy the mind, and enable it to spare the heroes whose fierce brilliance," &c.

Obscure as you say. My meaning is, that this select number has the effect of standing representative of the heathen character, and to retain the mind's devotion to it, notwithstanding so many of the great heathen were bad. It inflicts a feeling of misery to be employed three or four hours, as I have in this case been, about correcting a despicable sentence. I never had in my life a more perfect feeling than at this moment, of having labored to think till I cannot form one single idea. I seem to have no more mind than the inkstand.

. . . . I will endeavor to introduce one line of a note somewhere, according to your suggestion. to parry the imputation of consigning all heathens to destruction. . . .

I do not think any good can be done in the way of mottoes. It is such mere chance to find or recollect anything peculiarly apposite, and when it is not peculiarly so, one is always inclined to say, "Why could not the man have been quiet?" How often I have said this in reading mottoes. Any motto for the whole work, and therefore for the title-page, is out of the question, for volumes comprising a number of unconnected subjects; and one for a single separate essay looks very like poverty, unless there were one for each, which would be quite a desperate thing. The passage from Romans, for the fourth essay, would be too strong and rugged for an introductory sentiment. Nothing can be done; what is general cannot be particular, and is therefore of no value; what is particular cannot be general, and therefore cannot be applicable to the whole work. Besides, a motto in English alone would seem totally to forswear the scholar; and a motto in Latin would not be of a piece with that total exclusion of Latinisms which I felt necessary to preserve throughout the letters, because it will be known, by a number of the readers, that they were addressed to a female. . . . I am very unwilling to diminish the applause of Milton. The short notice of him in the last letter gives no proper place for a *general* estimate of his merits, and in that particular respect in which I have cited him, the applause is correct; he is evangelical far beyond every poet of consequence besides, except those whose

names I have mentioned after him. If you think it *very* necessary, I will write a short note to say, that I do not mistake him actually for Raphael or Gabriel. I deem a page or two, about where his name is connected with that of Pascal, the best in the volumes.

. . . . All my considerations about language have resulted in an aversion to the formal, squared, built style, of which I observe many instances of the present time, so different from the easy and admirable style of Bolingbroke.

. . . . The style of your predictions certainly raises the pitch of mine; yet I can by no means be so sanguine as to expect the speedy sale of a thousand copies, or the speedy call for a second edition. For one thing, no review will praise me, whether it were conducted by orthodox divines, by Socinians, or by Deists. No man might more justly appropriate the hackneyed motto, "*Nullius jurare magistri*,"—but the consequence will be, that no *magister* will approve or befriend me.

---

LIII. TO MRS. MANT.

*Frome, April 25, 1805.*

. . . . I had not heard of Mr. ——'s death before I received your letter. I felt a very pensive sentiment, while I so easily and so vividly recalled my interviews and conversations with him. I seemed to see and hear him as distinctly, as when I used to sit or walk with him. I really had a great esteem for him; but yet, my dear friend, we perfectly know, that his character was an extremely defective one, even since his becoming a Christian professor, not to go so far back as his juvenile history. Alas! my dear friend, how few are the persons that display the full consistent nobleness of the Christian character. In spite, however, of Mr. ——'s striking faults, I retained such an impression of his uniform, friendly attention to me, and of his ample knowledge, from which I gained much and various information which will be always useful to me, that I did feel a greater impression from the information of his death, than I had felt on account of any removal for a long time before, and more than I should from hearing of the death of any person in Chichester except one, and that one is R. Mant.

. . . . How very far you are from envying the frivolous taste, or the mean selfishness and spite, which have been the causes of your having so little intimacy, and partly losing the degree that you once had with ——. How infinitely preferable it is for you to go alone, than to go their way for the sake of company, especially while you can have at any hour, and every hour, the company of the greatest Power and the best Friend in the universe. All company will be insipid to a thoughtful mind if it is deprived of this; if it enjoy this habitually, it will be in a very great degree independent of all other. I say, in a *great degree*, for we have all felt, how desirable is agreeable human society, and have been glad

when we have had easy access to it. To become quite independent of it is such an attainment that even *I*, who have many dispositions tending to solitude, and those dispositions confirmed by habit, have not yet quite reached such a state of mind. If I could fully have had my will, however, I should, since I came to this place, have been very much of a recluse. And, indeed, on the whole, I have been so. Long spaces of time during the last months have been passed in a more solitary manner than any former part of my life; and I have deemed it a piece of good fortune when I have passed a number of days without going out of the house, and without any one calling on me. Indeed I am very seldom called on, for I never invite any one, except two sisters of great worth in this town, and they have only called once. The time that I spend with the family in whose house I lodge is extremely little. I systematically make it as little as possible, because I have my own affairs. I have been a rather assiduous student since I came into this house; though still there is great room to mend. It is most melancholy to review my life, and see the habitual indolence which has made it barren.

. . . . What are the feelings with which you meet another spring? Are you still as insulated from acquaintance? Do you continue to enjoy the consolations of religion? I have no doubt, you still feel the same detachment, happy detachment I may most justly call it, from an anxious love of life. Think, my dear friend, what a noble point of superiority this is to the state of the persons around you, however gay, young, or prosperous, who yet would feel horror-struck at the idea of death. Let this great concern of being ready, habitually ready for death, be our foremost every day and every hour, and then life may take its chance. How little has he to fear, who does not fear to die! Be this, then, always the first and foremost, and then let the other matters come as they may, or as they please. I say, let them come as they may; and I say this with a much better grace than if all were gay and prosperous in my own life and prospects; but I was born with an unchangeable tendency to melancholy, and shall probably never want actual causes for it. As for instance, though my eyes have for the last year and more been more easy and sound than several years before, yet the infallible symptoms that they will at length be darkened, gradually and steadily, and of late more perceptibly increase. Before I left Chichester a slight streak began to pass before them. This cloud has been increasing in size ever since, and by enlarging still a few years more, will bring on a total eclipse. It is entirely beyond the reach of any medical application. I have this darkness, therefore, fully in prospect. Again, two or three years since the gland in front of my neck began to swell; it has continued to swell in spite of every remedy, and very rapidly since I came to this town, in consequence of the greater effort necessary to speak within wide walls; if during a few months more I find it still increase, it will be absolutely necessary to give over preaching, and that for ever; for every professional man agrees that the complaint cannot, in a person of my age, be cured; all that can



be done will be to endeavor to check its progress, and I have no other hope that this can be done while I continue to preach. I have therefore the expectation, that not long hence, I must lose this mean of doing some little good, and this source of support. As to my matrimonial hopes, if this threatened event take place, those hopes are deferred indefinitely, and perhaps for ever; unless the business of authorship should prove more lucrative than I have any clear right to expect. . . . Thus you see, I make out some right to talk to you in the strain of consolation. I say to you again, Let us live for God and eternity, and then let Time do as it pleases. But yet, even as to time, with all its evils, if we are really the servants of the Almighty, he will make all things work together for our good, and we shall one day thank him with emotions of rapture for all the pains which he has mingled in our lot. . . .

---

LIV. TO THE REV. JOHN FAWCETT.

*Frome, May 23, 1805.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,—It is altogether in vain to attempt any excuse for answering a letter from a friend fifteen or sixteen months after it was received. I can only wish that the condemnation may fall on the right point of the character, and that excessive indolence, or anything else, may be imputed, rather than the want of a sincere and ever-constant regard. I own it rests simply on my assertion that this has not been the cause of my long silence, which would in no part of the world be deemed a proof of friendship. But I have my own consciousness that the permanence of friendly regard depends in my mind on the estimates of my judgment, and that you hold the same place in my judgment now, when the delusions of youth are passed away. The valued associate of some of the most interesting years of my life will be very often recalled to thought and affection, even to its latest periods. And I trust that both our lives, through whatever scenes they may separately pass, will be distinguished by that piety which will conduct them to close in the same point,—an entrance into the kingdom of social and eternal felicity. It appears to me a very long time since our walks and conversation at Brearley; the memory however of that period is still extremely vivid, and I am persuaded will always remain so. How many particular moments, places, incidents, and dialogues, I could recount. If I were with you I should feel it very interesting to spend a few hours in comparing our recollections, especially in a visit to the very places to which those recollections would refer. It is not improbable that I, though my memory is a very defective one, should have the stronger traces of those conversations and incidents, from this cause, that a person who leaves a place, and who has consequently no later associations with it to obliterate the earlier ones, looks back through a clearer medium, so to speak, to a former period, and to the circumstances of the place where



he then lived. In that direction of his thoughts nothing seems to stand between him and the distant object. You, on the contrary, have passed through a long series of events and social communications in the same neighborhood, and these would be found to occupy and crowd the latter part of your retrospect so much, as probably to render the remoter circumstances much less distinct. I wonder which of us feels to have undergone the greater change by the course of time. It seems to me hardly possible that you should more emphatically feel yourself a different person from what you were twelve or fourteen years since, than I do. And yet one great circumstance in your situation which is not in mine, your domestic relation, would seem sufficient of itself to change almost the whole economy of feeling. In this great article I find it quite impossible to imagine to myself the nature of the new order of sentiments, and the manner in which they must take place, of what was the general habit of feeling before. I can, however, very easily conceive your tender relations to form an estimable source of happiness, on which I can cordially congratulate you, while I think of you as passing your life habitually with a friend who loves you, and whom you love, and surrounded by a number of rising beings (how many ?) in whom you are destined to take a most affectionate interest to the last moment of your life. How far does your happiness, with the aid of these interests, exceed what you can imagine it possible to have attained without them ? May I suppose that you are *twice* as happy as you could have been in the insulated state to which I am still condemned ? But even a lower supposition than this will give me cause to commiserate my own destiny, thus far. When that destiny may change is beyond even conjecture. My situation in this respect would be altered in a very short time, if worldly circumstances gave me any prospect of competence ; but slender and precarious means, in times like the present, doom a man to bear his solitude as well as he can. I have a thousand times felt a vain regret on this subject, not only on account of being precluded from one of the capital means of felicity, and even of improvement, but also on account of the effect which I can perceive this exclusion to have on my character. It assists a very strong tendency which I feel to misanthropy.

I have long been taught and compelled by observation to form a very bad opinion of mankind ; this conviction is irresistible ; but at the same time I am aware of the Christian duty of cultivating a benevolence as ardent as if the contrary estimate of human character were true. I feel it most difficult to preserve anything like this benevolence ; my mind recoils from human beings, excepting a very few, into a cold, interior retirement, where it feels as if dissociated from the whole creation. I do not, however, in any degree approve this tendency, and I earnestly wish and pray for more of the spirit of the Saviour of the world.

Of my studies I cannot give you any account. As far as I have attended to anything which could at all deserve that name, it has been

in the most desultory manner imaginable. I have never yet succeeded in forming or adhering to any kind of plan or system. For many years past I have read comparatively but little,—a neglect which I feel daily and hourly cause to regret, and which very lately I have begun in some degree to remedy, or rather to reform. Observation of facts and of the living world, has perhaps, on some subjects, given me the feeling of having better materials for forming opinions than books could supply; but on very many of the greatest subjects books must be the principal instructors. I often mix together in the most confused manner the reading of books of quite opposite quality. As for instance, I lately read at the same time, Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*, and Baxter's *Account of his own Life and Times*. The work of Gibbon excites my utmost admiration; not so much by the immense learning and industry which it displays, as by the commanding intellect, the keen sagacity, apparent in almost every page. The admiration of his ability extends even to his manner of showing his hatred of Christianity, which is exquisitely subtle and acute, and adapted to do very great mischief, even where there is not the smallest avowal of hostility. It is to be deplored that a great part of the early history of the Christian church was exactly such as a man like him could have wished. There is no doubt that in his hands, Fathers, Councils, and the ancient contests and mutual persecutions of Christian parties, take their worst form; but after every allowance for this historian's malignity, it is impossible not to contemplate with disgust and reprobation a great part of what the Christian world has been accustomed to revere. . . .

I have lately begun to read the works of Charles Leslie. Happening to see the old volumes in the library of an acquaintance, I recollected the very strong manner in which Dr. Johnson once spoke of this writer. I intend to read a large proportion of him with the most careful attention. From what I have seen thus far, I doubt if there be in our language a theological writer of greater talents in the field of argument. I am gratified in the extreme degree by his most decisive reasonings against the Deists. A great part of his work seems to be against the Deists, Socinians, and Jews. Some of them are in defence of the established church, which of course it is now very needless to read. He was very fierce against dissenters.

Your life, I have been informed, is most completely filled with employment, and I rejoice that the employment will be of high utility. . . . I hope the consciousness of this utility and, I may add, the temporal advantage will alleviate, and in some imperfect [degree reward] the toil. For the supreme reward you must wait till another period. . . . I would express to your father in the strongest terms, the grateful [sense] which I shall never lose, of the advantages I derived from being his pupil. Each review of the progress of my mind (as far as I may be allowed to regard that progress as a course of improvement) recalls him to my memory as a wise and friendly preceptor, of whom I shall never cease to think with affection and veneration.

I am ashamed to revert to the old subject of authorship. It seems you had heard more than a year since, that I was going to print a number of essays. I supposed so myself, as I had written enough at that time for a moderate volume. But on consideration I felt, that one very long essay (on the subject of the Metropolis) would not be exactly the thing to appear in a first publication. I had therefore a good deal more to write to make a reasonable quantity; and when I began the critical revision (now as much as eight or nine months since) of the whole mass, I was confounded at the crudeness, feebleness, or inelegance, that met my sight in every page, and almost every paragraph. The revision and correction cost me, I really believe, as much labor as the whole previous composition, though composition is a task in which I am miserably slow. At length two volumes, 12mo., are nearly through the press, and would have been finished some time since, but for a general refusal of the printers to work without higher wages. . . . I am not very sanguine of success; for one thing, because there are other reasons than those of pure criticism, why no review will probably praise me. If I should be successful, and if I become disabled for personal public services, I shall devote myself entirely to the business of writing. . . . The person to whom the letters which make the essays, were addressed, is the female friend to whom my affections are irrevocably devoted. . . .

---

## LV. TO MRS. GOWING.

*Frome, August, 1805.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,—. . . I have numberless times wished to hear about you, and should have solicited you to write, but from knowing how much you dislike the task. I expected to have seen you before this time, and am amazed to think, that almost four months have elapsed since my last visit. How have you been, and what have you been doing since then? How strange it feels to me, that I who have lived years in your house and daily society, should not now be certain, whether you are in health, whether you have any determinate plans, whether the girls are with you, whether you are reconciled, for the time, to your house, and all the other things which I used so lately to know habitually, and which it would be at this moment an animated pleasure, or at least *interest* (for it would partly depend for being pleasure or not, on your being happy or not), to be able to learn. My dear friend, I feel that time does not at all lessen my regard for you; in every instance, in my past experience, I have found a very little time of absence and distance from those with whom I had associated to be a very complete test of the kind and degree of my interest in them; if that interest has been slight, and caused merely by having associated with them, I have always found it sink away after a very short time; much less than a year's absence would annihilate it. But I retain for you as cordial a friendship as on the pensive day that I

left your house. Believe me, my excellent friend, you are, and always will be dear to me. I would ask twenty questions about you, and your family, and your course of life, but that I cannot know for asking. But why will you not let me know? Surely it would not be so *very* severe a grievance for once to write part of a sheet. Surely you know, that I do not mind about letters not being written *fine*. And you do me extreme injustice if you do not believe, that any intelligence from you would be most welcome. . . . I rather expect to see your neighborhood before the end of next month. My mode of life is much the same, month after month; I continue as much a recluse as I well can; the difficulty is to make this recluse life a diligent one; I am almost despairing of ever being able to make my life anything worth, whether alone or social. My mind seems for ever to carry about with it five hundred weight of earth, or lead, or some other heavy and useless material, which denies it all power of continued exertion. How much I could regret, that industry and all other virtues are not, by the constitution of nature, as necessary and inevitable as the descent of water down a hill, and of all heavy bodies to the earth. There has indeed been a considerable quantity of mental hard exercise in manufacturing and finishing the essays lately published; but this exertion was all by bits and pieces, and I have acquired even *no degree* of anything like a *habit* of strong exercise by the employment. I have kept for you one of a few copies which I had for something less than the regular price at which they are sold. The book is considerably less than, from the quantity of paper which it seemed to fill in writing, I had expected it to make when printed. I will bring you this when I come. I do not know at all in what manner the thing sells; I shall not, however, be much disappointed if I should gain by it a good deal less than a hundred thousand pounds. I am afraid you and I were not born to find traps for catching crowds of those wandering guineas and bank-notes, with which some parts of this our earth seem to abound, and which some people, who do not seem so much wiser *any other way* than one's self, have such a wonderful knack of tricking into their possession.

. . . I have done more justice to the beautiful season this year than in many former ones; for I have taken many solitary walks, and with a book and pencil in my hand have done my best to catch all the ideas, images, objects, and reflections, that the most beautiful aspects and scenes of nature could supply. I have felt it of some consequence to me, if I am to write again, to assemble as many natural facts and images as possible, to supply what may be called colors to writing. I must increase the stock, or I shall soon be *out*, as I have expended a great deal of material on what is already written.

Into company I cannot actually take this book and pencil, but I endeavor to seize fast every remarkable circumstance, and each disclosure of character that I witness, and then, when I return to my room, they go by dozens into my book.

I keep to my text on the subject of forming new friendships; I am

quite too old for it. When I see people good and sensible, I am glad of it for *their* sake, not for my own. . . .

---

LVI. TO THE REV. DR. RYLAND.

*Frome, August, 1805.*

DEAR SIR,—I am ashamed that I have not sooner acknowledged your very friendly letter, which gratified me the more as the time in which it was written appeared to be actually *stolen* from the urgent claims of multiplied duties. My envy has been numberless times excited by thinking of your faculty of despatching such a variety of literary and other business within the short space of each month; and I have often, very often, made you a lesson of mortification to my own incurable indolence. Yet I am still unwilling to confess to myself that it *is* incurable, and would hope that a sense of duty, especially when aided by some measure of success, will yet prevail to excite me to vigorous and persevering exertion. When the listlessness returns, I trust the recollection of your exhortations and approbation will not be found a slight stimulus, as assuredly it will be felt a very strong reproach. I sincerely wish to render what service I may to the best cause, and if what has already appeared shall in any degree have this effect, I would be thankful to Heaven. Vanity is not probably my besetting sin, though it were in vain to disavow the indwelling of too much of this part and proof of human depravity. But I have no reason to reckon on such success as should greatly elate this very despicable passion, even if it were more prevalent than it is in my mind; especially as I have reason to expect the censure or contempt of one class of professed Christians, and of the most popular of those things called *reviews*, which contribute so much to lead and determine public opinion. I shall not cease to pray for a pure Christian zeal, and for divine assistance, to do what little an individual *can* do in this unhappy world. Have you never been inclined to regret that you were not reserved to come into it in that future glorious age when there will be so little necessary of the *present* order of Christian duties,—the zealous opposition to iniquity and error?

I have been constantly gratified to hear of your good health, and very active and successful labors. May the prospect of the crown still animate those labors, and a gracious Providence long protract the health and vigor requisite for prosecuting them.

. . . I felt a degree of exultation to hear at last of the purchase of the premises in Stokes Croft.\* It is a very noble acquisition to the cause: and we cannot doubt of an effect resulting which will continue even to the end of time. What have we to pray for next, but that the church may become prolific of combined talent and piety, so that a very

\* The present site of the Baptist College.

large number of young men may come forth qualified and animated, as agents of the divine power, to extend that kingdom which shall at length be extended, as to its space, over the earth; and as to its duration, through eternity?

May we, my dear sir, and our friends, be the eternal witnesses and participants of its glory.

---

LVII. TO MRS. GOWING.

*Frome, 1805.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I have for several weeks past intended to write to you against the Sunday. . . . To this I am prompted by an affectionate regard for you, which time and absence do not diminish, and which I shall never lose. I am certain I shall never lose it, because I completely know the structure of my own mind, and know that I never lose any sentiment which is absolutely founded on the estimates of my judgment. And I hope I do not need to say to you again, that my estimate of you is very high. I must however observe to you, that I have many times been hurt by your seeming not to believe me sincere when expressing such an estimate. I have always been perfectly sincere when using even the strongest expressions that I have at any time used. It is true that a half-smiling manner has sometimes accompanied these expressions; but that was your fault; I can never help this manner when I perceive that a person does not believe what I am saying. Do not then doubt my sincerity when I now assure you once more that I feel for you a very great degree of mingled respect and affection; and that you are one of the very small number of persons that I have ever known, whose affection I shall always be anxious to retain, and shall rejoice in every indication that it is not lessened nor lost.

Though I experience uniformly the utmost attention and respect from the family in whose house I am, I have never felt myself at home since I left your house. I never use the word *home* when speaking of, or returning to, the place of my residence. Whenever the word has occurred, my heart has rejected it, and recalled you, my dear friend, to my thoughts. With you I felt happy to pass a number of hours each day, till I felt the absolute necessity and duty of literary labor imposed on me, and that my extreme slowness of execution made all my time seem too little to do anything like what I wished. But even this allowed many pleasing social hours.

I wish you happy, my dear friend, and regret the unpleasant circumstances that attend you. Probably, however, your prospects include some things which in one way will be an alleviation. Allow me to urge you with great earnestness to secure the greatest possible measure of the highest order of consolations. How many thousand times I have resolved to cultivate personal religion, and especially that part of it

which consists in the direct exercises of devotion, with a much more serious diligence. I am still making the same resolutions, and not without hope. I would entreat you also to adopt this great expedient for happiness. We perfectly feel (and no instructions can make us more clearly understand) that we shall be happy or not in proportion to the prevalence or the want of habitual devotion to the Almighty. We are perfectly convinced too, that He will most certainly take a kind and parental care of *everything* that concerns even the temporal interests of those who are his devoted servants. Amidst the uncertainty of my prospects I often wish to feel the full value of this consolation. Do you also, my dear friend, have recourse to this noblest cause of hope.

. . . . What an immensity of beauty has spread over all your neighborhood since I was there. I have walked very little since then, but have been delighted at every sight of a hedge, tree, or field. A few days since I walked to the top of a very high hill about four miles from here, and saw a vast and beautiful prospect on almost every side.

Having gone through the whole of my late literary job without the help of an English dictionary of any kind, I have just now received as a present, from I do not know whom nor where, Johnson's great dictionary, new and elegantly bound,—a book that must have cost, I suppose, four guineas. I am much obliged to them, whoever they are; and shall be so much the better provided for my next literary labors. I am beginning anxiously to consider what are to be the subjects of those labors, and do not yet know. . . .

---

LVIII. TO THE REV. JOSEPH HUGHES.

*Frome, Aug. 20, 1805.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I have received your two notes, as well as your letter. I repeat to you that I am very grateful for the animated activity with which you have promoted my interests; and yet, at the same time, I cannot but be sorry for the personal, detailed, and *unliterary* trouble which it must have cost to sell a hundred and forty books. I really ought not, and cannot wish, to tax your friendship so far.

Five hundred copies disposed of in so short time might, in the circumstances, be considered as an extraordinary success, if so much of it were not owing to a few friendly individuals. Allow me to suggest to you not to send, in any way, any *hastening* intimation to any of the reviewers. L—— paid a very good price for this kind of impatience. In some of the reviews the later the notice and the better. For which of them will Hall write his critique, if he do write one? Such a one as he would write would not be accepted in the Monthly, which *could* do one the greatest service, and which will, in all probability, do an injury. If a plausible character of the book appear in any other review earlier than the notice in the Monthly, that notice will be so much the

more spiteful on that account. I have a very clear perception of what that is in the style which your Socinian critic calls *pompous* and *affected*. It is a certain *kept up* formality, an artificial march of diction, which I have before called half-rhetorical. I wish it were possible to attain more ease and simplicity. As to praise and censure, whatever effect they may have on the feelings of vanity, they will have extremely little on my estimate of the book, or of the faculties which produced it; my own deliberate opinion is *too* deliberate to be raised or depressed. It were in vain to pretend that I do not feel so much of that mean passion which can be elated by applause, and mortified by the contrary, but there is nothing under heaven which I more sincerely and totally despise, and nothing which ever makes me so emphatically despise myself. I feel it infinitely despicable at the very moment that I feel it excited; and I hope by degrees to be substantially delivered from it. I have a thousand times been astonished that this mean feeling should not have been completely extirpated by the sincere and deliberate contempt which I have long entertained for human opinion—opinion I do not mean as regarding myself, but as regarding any other person or book. One cannot have lived thus long in the world without perceiving how little sterling sense there is among mankind, especially in regard to anything a little removed from the common ground of their business and attention. And then that which there is, *never* operates *simply* and unbiassed by circumstances tending to pervert it. How constantly everywhere one observes opinions to be the result of whim, of momentary impression, of partiality, of spite, or of adherence to a class; and to betray ignorance, incapacity, or inattention. There is neither affectation nor sagacity in these remarks; the truth of them is obvious to every attentive observer; and I have observed long enough to acquire a fixed contempt of the opinions of mankind. It is needless to say, that by mankind we mean the generality, including, when this estimate of their opinions is expressed, a very large proportion even of those who have received a considerable degree of cultivation.

Whatever degree of vanity, less or more, I may feel, there is another feeling which in my present circumstances is much more prevalent, and which I do *not* despise myself for even indulging, "*auri sacra fames*."

A few corrections will be very necessary, yet I think the necessary are not many, and further than necessary it would be wrong to go, especially as the business must be to make *another* book, and not to be spending time and labor without end on this one. Some of the *obscure* passages are so from a kind of expression that may be mended; some appear so because the *sentiment* is recondite, and no form of words can make it plain to a reader who has not analogous sentiments of his own. I shall make corrective notes as they may occur to me. The grand fault in the fourth essay is the indefiniteness of the denomination, "*Evangelical Religion*," which I seem to use sometimes in a specific sense, and sometimes in the more general sense, tantamount to—*Christianity*.



But this cannot be mended ; at least, I do not see how, as it goes through the whole texture. It must even be let alone. I am not certain that I had a correct idea of what is meant by the Omnipotence of Truth ; nor whether it is right to confound truth with *conviction* or persuasion, in the manner I have done. I do not see that more religious references ought to have appeared in the essay on Decision, &c., as the object was merely to illustrate the *general* principles of this decision, as applicable to religious pursuits, or any other indifferently, and not to dwell, except very briefly, on *any* specific form of the operation of these principles. And besides, I think the volumes have quite a competent measure, on the whole, of what belongs to religion ; such a measure, that any considerable addition would have given the appearance of a specifically religious book, which would not have been the best policy, either for usefulness or literary success. I am glad of Wilberforce's approbation.

. . . . I shall reckon on seeing you both in Bristol and here ; and if it really will be of any use for me to visit London, I should prefer returning with you from the west. To do it just now, would seem as if I were very eager to get a little flattery, which I really am not, and which there is no need for me to appear to want. . . .

It is probable, that what I recollect to have said some time since about the continuance of my preaching, appeared to you only a casual or exaggerated expression ; and I have felt little inclined to repeat the simple and absolute fact, that I shall not be able to preach any great while longer ; this is now become more certain than when I first said it. It is no matter of *apprehension*, but a thing entirely decided. . . . It is not my *throat* now that causes me any inconvenience ; *that* has been perfectly well a long time ; the complaint is a formidable swelling of the gland that passes across the front of the neck, which cannot be reduced, and which in this enlarged state presses with a weight and constriction on the moving parts that are constantly in action in speaking ; and the effort is at once very uneasy, sometimes quite painful, and causes a continual increase of the evil. Even *talking* a great deal for several hours in company becomes very oppressive, as well as injurious ; and I look forward with dread mingling with pleasure to the whole days which I may spend with you some time hence. Lately I spent almost a whole day with Sibree, Williams of Westbury, and another of the fraternity ; and though much pleased with the company, the evening became extremely oppressive from this physical cause, and the escape into silence by our separation was an exquisite luxury. I am probably destined, through the whole of life, to be under the necessity of restraining the copiousness of expression, even in the easy talk of domestic society. A grand advantage which I promise myself from this is, to acquire, from necessity, the art of putting more thought in fewer words—an inestimable art, for a writer especially. My regret for the preclusion from the possible utility of preaching is considerably consoled by the hope, that I may be able to render much greater services to the best Master, and the

best cause, by writing. Viewed in regard to my personal interests, this is a melancholy dispensation. . . . I cannot see any reason for your relinquishment of literary purposes. With the amendment so often noted already, you will write vigorously and elegantly. We must both endeavor to do something that will speak a little while, at least, after we are finally silent. Keep yourself in the exercise, with a particular reference to the points where modification is desirable. . . .

---

## LIX. TO MRS. R. MANT.

*Frome, November 22, 1805.*

. . . . During the summer, I several times intended to have written again ; but really I was not born under the writing planets, whichever they may be. It occurred to me sometimes, that it was but too probable you were again suffering that severe head-ache which has before so much lessened to you the value of the delightful season, delightful to a person in health. Yet, as I do not remember to have ever known a summer with so little oppressive heat, I am willing to persuade myself that you have not suffered quite so much as in former seasons. If you did not, you would be delighted with the extraordinary beauty which prevailed throughout the entire season ; there was never a parching and scorching interval ; the verdure never died, nor hardly even languished. I never have been more enchanted with a summer, since I left whatever part of creation or chaos I lived in, in former ages, and came to this our green orb. I took frequent solitary walks ; even as matter of duty I did it sometimes, when the attraction of pleasure might have failed to overcome my great indisposition to move. Those walks were commonly in the retired fields and woody lanes, of which I found a number this last summer in this neighborhood, some of them very beautiful, as well as extremely quiet. There are, besides, two or three extremely beautiful valleys not far from this town. As to the town itself, I do not know whether I told you how much I nauseate it ; but no length of time would ever cure my loathing of it. But sweet Nature ! I have conversed with her with inexpressible luxury ; I have almost worshipped her. A flower, a tree, a bird, a fly, has been enough to kindle a delightful train of ideas and emotions, and sometimes to elevate the mind to sublime conceptions. When the autumn stole on I observed it with the most vigilant attention, and felt a pensive regret to see those forms of beauty, which tell that all the beauty is going soon to depart. One autumnal flower (the white convulvulus) . . . excited very great interest, by recalling the season I spent at Chichester, where I happened to be very attentive to this flower, and once or twice, if you recollect, endeavored to draw it with the pencil. I have at this moment the most lively image of my doing this, and of the delight I used to feel in looking at this beautiful flower in the hedges of those paths and fields with which both you and I are so well acquainted.

Yes, *I* am well acquainted, though it is now beginning to be long since my wanderings and musings there; yet I could most promptly find each field, each path, each gate, each corner, each stile. . . . I could tell where I formed plans, indulged pensive regrets for the waste of past life, made pious resolutions, or let my fancy run into visionary reveries. All this is out of your house; I need not say how well I recollect the circumstances, conversations, readings, &c., which took place in the house. I shall always be partial to the recollection of that house; to the pictures which gave a kind of life to the walls; to the pretty vine which crept in at my window;—and all this chiefly for the sake of the inhabitant—who, I conclude, is the inhabitant still, though I have left it so long. While she continues in it, may the greatest Being in the universe continually visit her there. I am well assured she will crave his society, and I know, too, that he loves to receive and accept such invitations.

---

LX. TO D. PARKEN, ESQ.\*

*Frome, November 20, 1806.*

DEAR SIR,—Your letter seems to require to be answered some time, and the present may be as proper a time as any other. The writer of an article in a Review is apprised, of course, of the conditions under which he writes it. He knows that the editor is responsible for the whole publication, and that he must necessarily be the judge and arbiter of both the whole and the parts of every piece that is supplied and submitted to him. The writer, therefore, surrenders it at discretion, to be modified as the occasion requires, and abandons it to its chance without taking any further interest or care about it as his *own*. This is no doubt one cause, as I have seen some writer observe, that few pieces, comparatively, of good writing, will be likely to appear in reviews, since the writer will seldom make much effort about what is merely to serve its temporary purpose, and be no further an object of his care after he has sent it out of his hands. This, however, is the condition under which he writes, and his business is to keep himself perfectly indifferent in what manner his pages may be put in print. All this I knew, and therefore need not disavow the remotest wish to interfere in any way with the province and authority of the editor. After the piece is printed, and indeed after these few lines, I shall not make the smallest remark or complaint.

As you have made some remarks and exceptions, however, I will here say a few words in the person of the writer of the piece.

And, in the outset, I do not believe there is one sentence too much in the spirit of censure or satire. It may be all very true about Sir William's good qualities among his friends, but here he comes forth before the

\* In reference to Mr. Foster's critique on Forbes's Life of Beattie, inserted in the Eclectic Review for January and February, 1807, "Contributions," &c., vol. I., p. 19—36.

public with a great book. In the first place, this book is quite unnecessary, as there was a fully long enough account of Dr. Beattie before published; and if it *had* been necessary, it is far too big for the subject, unless, as I have said, all proportion and modesty, as to the extent of record claimed by individuals, are to be set at defiance. This is, besides, becoming a *custom*, and Hayley has played the penny and book-making game with a vengeance. This book is eked out with very many very insignificant letters, with leaf after leaf of fac-similes, with analyses of books, with long stories about the union of colleges, and with an immense quantity of miscellaneous heraldic biography and genealogy. In the next place, unless all the rules by which we judge of men in their conversation are to be reversed, when we are to judge of so much of their characters as they voluntarily choose to display in their books, there never was a greater excess of ostentation on the part of the author than in this book. It is impossible not to know what judgment we should form, as to this point, of a man who, alluding in the course of his conversation to many distinguished personages, should always take care to let us know that these persons were his old familiar acquaintance, when there was no other use in the information, and no need to give it. It appears evident to me, that not a few of these short pieces of biography and genealogy were introduced for the very purpose of telling, that the author was acquainted with one distinguished personage more: and if this is not the case, and all this is done in sheer simplicity, the reviewer cannot be exculpated for letting go, without castigation, an instance of such weakness as would be made a precedent of unbounded ostentation and egotism. Sir W. takes care to tell, that much stronger things in the way of compliment were in Dr. Beattie's letters to him, but that he has left them out, and this is said to apologize for those strong things which are retained. Why, in the name of decency, were they not *both* omitted? Or, if this could not be done without actually destroying the texture of the letters, why were the letters printed at all? Who wanted the letters, or can be benefited by them? And besides, unless he had intimated that the emolument from the book would, at least in part, be applied to some other than personal use, does not the whole affair look like his raising money by showing strangers the monument of his friend?

Again; the correspondence is most obviously crammed with excess of praise and mutual flattery: here my eye glances on your remark, that "everybody is made splenetic by everybody else's praise." This may be true enough, but what has it to do with the subject? The reviewer may be prompted by spleen, and half a dozen more such virtues, but this is nothing to the *public*; the question is only whether his allegation is just, that is, whether it is true; and surely the present case is out of all doubt. Are not the correspondents habitually larding and daubing one another with flattery from head to foot, and next, all their acquaintance? Is not every virtue, every accomplishment, and every talent almost, constantly attributed to each other, and all who were their friends; while at

the very same time we know that many of them were just no better than they should be? Even the late miserable archbishop — is liberally bepraised, of whom I happen to know specific facts that prove him one of the meanest muckworms that ever crawled into a mitre. Sir W. describes *James Boswell* as a man of “fervent devotion!!!” These are his identical words, and I should have cited them in the critique, but because I thought it could not be done without requiring to be accompanied with some expression of such emphatical censure or contempt as would be absolute rudeness. They all join with one consent in the profoundest sorrow, on account of the profane and frivolous Garrick, who was, however, one of the best of human beings. As to the lavish excesses of encomium on Dr. B. and his writings, let it be recollected, that there were many contemporary writers of even greater fame; and that they, it is to be presumed, had also their friends, who wrote to them and of them in the very same style. Now only imagine that the correspondence of and concerning each of them were to be published, after this edifying example, what is to become of us *then*, or of modesty, decency, or sense? What a nauseous inundation of fulsome folly we should have to wade, swim, or drown in. And why should not this be done in every instance? There would be the same right. Now is a critic, because he is called Eclectic, and is an excellent good Christian, to let all this pass as a display of the amiable feelings of friends for one another, as Sir W. would have it understood? Or is he even to praise it, as I dare say some of the Reviews have done, though I have not seen one of them? Or if he blames it, is he to do this in a dull quotation from Tillotson’s Sermons, or in the feebleness of a few milk-and-water phrases? If friends choose to write in this style to and of one and another, let them; the critic is not bound to keep in his pay scoundrels, to rob the mails in order to come at their letters; but if these are all to be published, I think he is bound by every law of public decorum to indict the nuisance.

Then as to the *royal conversation*, as *what*, and *for what*, is it to be introduced? As a specimen of royal wisdom? or *for* an attempt to coax the public, by an overdone loyalty, to take in the review? This would seem much of a piece with the awkward and laborious loyalty by which the dissenters have of late years disgraced themselves in many of their publications. It however loses, as it deserves to lose, its reward. A spirited, independent, critical work may easily throw off this, without on the other hand dashing into faction. Can there be a more fair object of satire than that pomp and importance which a literary man assumes, and his friends for him, on account of his having talked with . . . a king? It appears to me, quite time of the day to show that we are not to be gulled into admiration of his sublime fortune. It would be difficult to show this *seriously* without an air of faction; dry, calm satire, therefore, is the only resource. . . .

On the whole, then, I am entirely of the opinion with which I began (and it is quite in character for any kind of writer to be of this opinion

concerning anything he has written, if it were even but a paragraph in a newspaper), that if one sarcastic or condemnatory sentence is softened and neutralized, it will be so much spoiled, not simply in respect of writing, but of *justice*. Better turned sarcasms or censures may be easily invented, but if the writing is reduced *out* of satire and *out* of censure, it is destroyed as a review.

The Eclectic wants a greater proportion of this class of writing; I do not say like *my* specimens, but of this general quality. There are a good many exceptions, and I verily believe these are from the pen of the editor; but the greater part falls under the heavy censure of literary men (without whose approbation no *literary* work can prosper), as defective in spirit, freedom, and poignancy. I have heard a good many of them talk of the subject; and what they say is, that the Review *dares* nothing; that its highest ambition seems to be to do no harm; that it takes the style of a puritan divine in some instances where that of Voltaire would be better; that it is too anxious to preserve a quiet impunity under the wings of orthodoxy and loyalty; that it is like a dog that has been whipped, and therefore but just ventures to growl, and then runs away . . . &c., &c.

I should not forget to allude to the parts of the article in question which relate to the pecuniary assistance deemed necessary to Dr. Beattie, and to the niece of Mrs. Cockburn, and these passages *ought* to be bitter, whether they are or not. Nothing can possibly be too acrid for the occasions. One recollects the cases of Burns, Bloomfield, &c., but those in question are much more legitimate cases for the lash.

Here is a man of moderate, economical, prudent habits; a deep student, a diligent lecturer, an useful writer, and an amiable man; who is in circumstances hardly affording, or securing the permanence of, the comforts of life; and there are a very great number of affluent, literary, titled, and most affectionate dear friends, and Sir William among them, who are *wishing*, and *wishing*, and *wishing* that some little matter could be done for him, while they are rolling, many of them, in luxury and splendor. That his delicacy would not have refused their generosity, is evident from the animated gratitude he expressed for Mrs. Montague's hint. And here again is a desolate widow of extraordinary worth and endowments, who is *actually known to, and visited by a great number of persons of distinction, and particularly the Duchess of Gordon, who yet lives dozens of years in a state next to absolute want*; and yet these persons' knowing her is mentioned by Sir W. with the utmost complacency!!! Now if a Review can pass quietly over all this as all very good and pretty, or just only make some innocent, insipid remark upon it, that Review deserves to perish. I have no more to add, but that having thus told my mind, I shall not make the slightest complaint, whatever alteration is made, and that I remain,

Yours respectfully,

J. FOSTER.

## LXI. TO THE REV. JOSEPH HUGHES.

Frome, January 21, 1807.

. . . . I am writing to Paternoster Row for a whole set of the Edinburgh Review. It is a work essential to the library of a literary man. My own experiments in reviewing make me more distinctly feel the measure of talent evinced in that work; a work, though, of very bad tendency as to religion.

. . . . You saw the stupid article about the Essays in the Monthly Review. . . . The Edinburgh will not take any notice. . . . I have been struck at seeing how much the truth of the last essay is evinced by the very manner in which all the Reviews, excepting the one or two specifically religious, have noticed that essay. Even the candid and plausible ones have considered it as the worst part of the book,—a kind of appendage of subordinate material which had better have been omitted.

For the last three months nearly, I have been keeping myself to work with great seclusion, and a tolerable degree of application,—a very meritorious application, since it has been a dogged self-compulsion; for all the labor has been *invitâ Minervâ*. Yes, I have almost every day felt it an ungracious and unsuccessful task,—ungracious in a great measure from its being unsuccessful. Almost the only exception to this description was in one or two of the days in which I wrote the critique on Sir W. Forbes, which I did with a facility which I have never felt since. In part I attribute the sterility and inert cast of thought to the dreary influence of winter; and I am warranted to do this, from having always felt this effect of this influence since I had anything to do with studying and writing. Johnson may say what he pleases, but I know, and have long known, as to myself, that there is a very great difference, in the powers of imagination at least, between winter and the spring and autumn. On this account I regretted that my London dissipation should fall in such a way as to alienate the finest part of autumn from the business of composition. The two or three first weeks after my return hither I felt the most extreme repugnance to go to work, and had also, as another prevention, a number of visits to make. After these two or three thus spent, I flagellated myself in great anger, and drove myself to work, and have kept at it ever since, with the occasional interruption of a day, which has been lost, perhaps, from some visiting person spoiling the morning, which, during these short days, is incomparably the best part. By sheer hard labor I have worked out perhaps twice as much as I ever did within the same number of weeks before, but hardly one page has appeared to me to be done well. I have worked under the feeling that I must not wait for more auspicious times, but, good or bad, must absolutely produce something. The subject also is unfavorable,\* as being of a wide and common-place nature, just as well admitting one thing to be said as another, and all resting on a few main principles, so

\* On the Improvement of Time.

perfectly trite and obvious, that it is excessively difficult to give the smallest appearance of point or novelty. As to fine figures, not one of them ever comes near me. I never before thought and wrote so much with half so few images. The utility of the business will be the only consolation. Of that I cannot altogether fail. There is no hope of getting to an end in less than three months; for the truth is that I had written hardly anything before I returned hither from London. A number of sheets full of mere topics and hints indeed, but no composition. I see no chance that the thing will be much less than the whole of the four essays together.

---

## LXII. TO THE REV. JOSEPH HUGHES.

*Frome, March 12, 1807.*

. . . . My having transferred my residence to a different house, together with a deluge of new entertainment rushing upon me in the form of the Edinburgh Review, and several other things, has made a deplorable chasm in my sentence-making for more than a month past. But I must and will be at it again from this day forward. I am quite ashamed to see how much the days are lengthened since I did anything material to the business. It will not, however, be quite in vain to have read a large portion of this terrible Review; a work probably superior to everything of the kind for the last century, everything since Bayle's time. I read it with abhorrence of its tendency as to religion, but with admiration of everything else. It cannot fail to have a very great effect on the literary world, by imperiously requiring a high style of intellectual performance, and setting the example. It is most wonderful how a parcel of *young men* have acquired such extensive and accurate knowledge, and such a firm, disciplined, unjuvenile habit of thinking and composing. But I shall not be made to believe that they have not an old fox or two among them. Yet they all admirably support the general level of able performance. The belles-lettres critics seem to be stocked with logic as well as principles of taste, and the scientific critics to be fraught with satire as well as definitions. Either their modesty or their pride keeps them almost clear of any direct attention to theology, but their incidental references are detestable and pernicious. It may not seem very consistent after this to insist, that you must have this work, from the beginning, and so must or ought every other intellectual and literary man: he cannot pretend to have a competent library without it. . . .

---

## LXIII. TO JOSEPH COTTLE, ESQ.

[In answer to an invitation to meet S. T. Coleridge.]

*Frome, June, 1807.*

MY DEAR SIR,—I am very unfortunate in having made an engagement



two or three weeks back, to go just at this time on a very particular occasion, to a distant place in this county, and therefore being deprived of the very high luxury to which you so kindly invite me. I shall be unavoidably detained, for a very considerable time, and my imagination will strongly represent to me the pleasure and advantage of which an inevitable necessity deprives me. But I will indulge the hope, that I shall some time be known to Mr. Coleridge, under more favorable circumstances in a literary respect, than I can at present, after a regular application to the severer order of studies shall in some measure have retrieved the consequences of a very loose and indolent intellectual discipline, and shall have lessened a certain feeling of imbecility which always makes me shrink from attempting to gain the notice of men whose talents I admire.

No man can feel a more animated admiration of Mr. Coleridge than I have retained ever since the two or three times that I was a little while in his company; and during his absence in the south and the east, I have very often thought with delight of the immense acquisitions which he would at length bring back to enrich the works which I trust the public will in due time receive from him, and to which it has an imperious claim. And still I trust he will feel the solemn duty of making his very best and continued efforts to mend as well as delight mankind, now that he has attained the complete mastery and expansion of his admirable powers. You do not fail, I hope, to urge him to devote himself strenuously to literary labor. He is able to take a station amongst the most elevated ranks, either of the philosophers or the poets. Pray tell me what are his *immediate* intentions, and whether he has any important specific undertaking in hand. For the sake of elegant literature, one is very glad that he has had the opportunity of visiting those most interesting scenes and objects which you mention. Will you express to him in the strongest terms my respect, and my animated wishes for his health, his happiness, and his utility. You can inform me what is the nature of that literary project to which you allude. Tell me also, what is the state and progress of your own literary projects, and I hope I may say labors.

I behaved shabbily about some slight remarks which I was to have ventured on Mr. Southey's *Madoc*. On reading the critiques of the *Edinburgh Review* on *Thalaba* and *Madoc*, I found what were substantially my own impressions, so much better developed than I could have done, that I instantly threw my remarks away. Let me hear from you when you have half an hour of leisure, and believe me to be with every kind remembrance to your most excellent family, my dear sir,

Most cordially yours,

JOHN FOSTER.

## LXIV. TO MRS. R. MANT.

*Frome, July 18, 1807.*

. . . . In the article of society, I know you are unfortunate, and have long been so. Even if the persons near you would be friendly, they would yield you but a very defective satisfaction; their tastes are in general so very different from yours. Though you would sometimes be gay, you would not be frivolous, and though you would be gay *sometimes*, yet you would wish to be *often* serious. . . . A time will come, when you will know why it was appointed you to walk to a better state and better society through a path so desolate and solitary. That it is appointed by infinite wisdom and goodness your faith is well assured, though it is perhaps unavoidable for the heart sometimes to feel sad. Women that pass through life without forming any domestic connections are sometimes, perhaps generally, left more solitary than others when they advance towards its latter part. But yet, what circumstances of vexation and wretchedness they escape. This remark I am led to make by a fact that has happened in this town this very morning. A middle-aged woman, a widow, who has always borne a respectable character, has cut her throat, and is dead, owing, it is said, to the vexation occasioned her by two wicked sons. Think of this, my dear friend, and consider how much better is a situation like yours, in a social respect, than one so miserable as to lead to such a catastrophe. I could wish you, what perhaps you cannot have, excellent, cheerful, and social friends; but I still more wish you, what you *can* have, much of the society of that supremely beneficent Being, who is able to make you a compensation, both here and hereafter, for all that he at present sees it proper to refuse you. Let me once again exhort you, while I would admonish myself also, to be much in the exercise of making your requests known to the Almighty. It is the greatest of all consolations upon earth. . . . My father and mother are still living, but very infirm; the former being I believe as much as eighty-two years of age, and the latter about seventy-five. My brother, who is a number of years younger than myself, has three or four children. . . .

## LXV. TO THE REV. JOSEPH HUGHES.

*Frome, January, 1808.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,—. . . I am sitting in the midst of authors, in the office of Minos; a pack of scoundrels they are; infidels to a man, both small and great. Just now I am about the vile pamphlet of Scott Waring (as I am told), called "Observations," &c. I repeat to you, this is a most excellent mode of mental and preparatory exercise; and I feel very sensibly that I acquire a stronger hand, and a more comprehensive view, by means of it. Once more, therefore, I exhort you to

join in the same good cause. For a good while past I have quite neglected any other composition; and probably shall do so now till quite into the fine days of spring, which, spite of Johnson, is far more favorable to original thinking, and the rich play of imagination, than this chill and dreary season, with its fogs, snows, and endless nights. The authorship will be all the better, when I set to it in earnest, from this diversified exercise, in which I continually am made to feel a humiliating debility, and a prodigious ignorance. Often I am perhaps too willing to impute the former to the latter. Both will lessen by the continuance of discipline. The removal to Bourton will rather harden than slacken this discipline. Our plan is that of a mutually very hard life. My Maria rejoices in this prospect, and will be an estimable companion and prompter, and participator of improvement. She regrets the indolence and mental lassitude of her past life as much as I do of mine; and, for conscience' sake, for pleasure's sake, for utility's sake, and for each other's sake, we shall adopt a plan by which we shall hope to make the improvement of our united life equal to its tenderness. . . .

---

LXVI. TO THE REV. JOSEPH HUGHES.

*Frome, February 15, 1808.*

. . . . Coleridge was lately in Bristol, and Cottle wrote to me to say they two had been on the point of visiting me at Frome, but that Cottle's lameness had decided them rather to ask me to go to Bristol. It was impossible for me to do this at the time; without putting off the review of Scott Waring to a later number of the Eclectic, which P. had earnestly deprecated, and for what were obviously good reasons. I was compelled therefore to decline it, and wrote to Cottle to express my highest respect to Coleridge, and my hope that I might some time perhaps better deserve to be acquainted with the great genius.

Coleridge has some project of a new review, it seems, on which Cottle says he wished to talk with me, having heard, I suppose, that I am a decent journeyman, as the business in general goes. Have you attended any of his lectures at the Royal Institution? Cottle says he is very greatly improved as to the religious part of the character of his mind, and that really he is even substantially *orthodox*, as well as a believer in Christianity in the general. I do not suppose he will have the requisite perseverance for giving full effect to a review, if it should ever be commenced.

. . . . Once more I tell you to become a reviewer; it will fling your diction abroad into variety and freedom. It is the best writing discipline in the world. If that Coleridge should really begin, we will now and then get to be of his gang. . . . You must not think of leaving this dusty planet without first writing a valuable and a fine book or two; but in order to this you must get more freedom of diction, and this reviewing is the very thing. . . .

## LXVII. TO MISS B——.

Frome, February 15, 1803.

. . . . I shall always recollect with most grateful pleasure the very large contribution to the interest and felicity of my life, which has been derived from your family during a number of years past, and which I trust will, at successive times, be derived again; for I should leave this place with a melancholy feeling if I did not promise myself that I shall sometimes, wherever I may be placed, see you in visits of not a short duration to me and my Maria. . . . I do not regard it as likely that we shall continue, if life is prolonged, any very long time at Bourton. It is very much too far from any grand scene of human society and knowledge, to be adapted to the kind of life to which I am necessarily and permanently devoted. It is not, as you well know, that I want to be very much in various society, but I want the means of *knowing* and *seeing* with facility many things which are to be known and seen only in, or in the neighborhood of, very large towns. The neighborhood of Bristol would please me better than almost any other place; and if we should become residents there, it would be a thing of perfect ease to see you, even frequently. Meanwhile, you must endeavor to think it worth while to visit Bourton. Our residence there for a short time—say for two or three years—if life should continue, may very well suit for the kind of improvement and attainment which I am most defective in, and most determined to endeavor to acquire.

I am glad you have met with so many things and persons that have given you pleasure or improvement. In Coleridge you saw one of the highest class of human beings, with respect to combination of talents, and I am exceedingly glad to learn from Mr. C. that he is much more firmly established in the principles of religion than at any former period of his life; he is, as Mr. C. tells me, in a very great degree even *orthodox*. If this were *previous* to his being exposed to all the causes which contribute to pervert human genius, one should be less assured of its value; but it is very gratifying when this is the state of such a mind after travelling over Europe, associating with wits and infidel philosophers, and being exposed to the influence of a thousand things tending to lead such a mind into an oblivion or rejection of Christian truth. I wonder he should have maintained a theory on the subject of taste, which, as you observe, there are such a multitude of facts to confute. I shall be very glad to hear you personally tell all that you observed, heard, or thought, in attending his lecture.

The friend to whom you refer has been, since you saw her, transferred by a greater Friend to a happier region, from which affection could not for one moment wish to recall her to a life of suffering. That suffering no doubt was intended, and has conduced, to qualify her for the sublime scene and society to which she has been called. It will be very consolatory to you in reflection to have seen her, to have soothed her afflic-

tion, and to have witnessed her preparation for the superior abodes. You will combine the two ideas, of what she was, and what she is, in a more affecting manner, and when some of the pensiveness of thought is removed by time, in a more pleasing manner, than you would have been able to do if you had not seen her once more before the change. I earnestly hope that whoever shall be appointed to precede us, or to follow us, in the transition to another life, we shall exercise incessant solicitude and diligence, that we may not fail to be added in due time to the best and happiest beings in the universe.

When you return hither you will probably find the generality of persons and things much in the same state as when you left them. . . . As to myself, I am solitary still, with the exception of the interesting hours which I pass at your house, and a very occasional visit to a few other houses. Sometimes, from a species of absolute force, I am very industrious for a week or two, and then I relapse into musing indolence, or the most desultory and useless kind of reading. Reviewing has been the chief part of anything I could call labor for a good while past, and I find it an extremely advantageous mode of literary exertion, as to its effect in strengthening the power of comprehension and vigorous expression. In this respect I am sensible of a gradual, though slow improvement of the intellectual powers and operation. I most sincerely promise myself to improve much faster in a given space of time when I have an interesting domestic associate, whose congenial taste and solicitude not to live in vain will often inspire a degree of animation into important pursuits, which it is impossible almost to maintain in the cold listlessness of habitual solitude. My estimable associate expects a very *hard life*, in regard to mental exertion, and she loves to expect it, both as forming a dignified basis of social interest, and as strongly adapted to her own improvement, not to mention that such an occupation of social time will materially contribute to facilitate the prosecution of a business which is to be in part the source of competence, and may also obtain a little for beneficence, and may effect a little for public utility.

. . . I cannot, my dear friend, have lived so long in this world, without acquiring the painful knowledge that all human hopes are subject to a degree of disappointment; for this, to some certain extent, both myself and M. are pensively prepared; but we do uniformly think, that if Providence shall be benign, we have a rational prospect of a greater measure of felicity (but it seems almost presumption for an inhabitant of the earth to use such a word) than we generally see in married life, and that this felicity will be of a finer quality. We do not forget, that in some way or other it is the inevitable lot of mortality to experience sorrow, but we *do* hope we cannot be fated to regard each other as the cause of it.

I have just received Mr. Cottle's new poem, "The Fall of Cambria," in two duodecimos, and have read a little, from which I think it must be a pleasing work; you can mention it, if any one asks you to name a new book for a reading society.

## LXVIII. TO THE REV. JOSEPH HUGHES.

*Frome, March 3, 1808.*

. . . . Yes, the spring does open upon me with a fascination which I have not felt before, notwithstanding that I have often felt a kind of worship of nature, on the return of that delightful season, with its flowers, birds, and genial gales. This once I certainly do feel in its first indications a deeper charm than I did even in my youth, when I was as full of fancy and sentiment as any poet. For several years I have been much less susceptible of the vernal impressions, and have considered myself as advancing fast toward the state of feeling which I recollect P. a few years since described himself to me as having reached, the state of feeling no impression at all. And no doubt it is from the new and adventitious cause, that I have felt such luxury in the beautiful days, which we have had for a week past.

I am glad of your concurrence in opinion as to the high value for domestic interest, of associated intellectual enjoyments. This is both to me and M. supremely gratifying, as furnishing at all events, a perfect security against *ennui*, and the waste of time,—as involving and even necessitating, the improvement of both our minds,—as improving them in the *same direction*, so as to make the individual attainments interchangeable, and so to speak mutually recognizable,—as tending to promote our highest interests, as giving scope for great diversification in the indulgence of tenderness,—and as essentially conducing to our ordinary temporal means;—to a certain extent, I may perhaps add, as tending to effect a little public usefulness. . . . We are most powerfully convinced, that no mistake could be more fatal than that of the uncalculating persons who, in forming such an union, place their *whole* reliance on affection and its indulgences. This is the wretched mistake commonly made by very young persons, and which I myself was not incapable of having made at that age. For many years past, however, I have been too wise. . . .

## MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS, FACTS, SUGGESTIONS, ETC., WRITTEN DURING MR. FOSTER'S RESIDENCE AT FROME.

1. A long, admonitory, and cogent conversation with Mr. and Mrs. — about education. Insisted on the indispensable law of habitual, prompt, and absolute obedience of young children. In observing on the *mode* of obtaining this obedience, represented strongly the wretchedness of the plan which does not maintain authority as a necessary and habitual thing in so uniform a manner that the child scarcely even *thinks* of resistance, any more than of thrusting its hand into the fire; but by a succession of violent efforts each of which is of the nature of a battle, and a trial of strength and of rights with the child, in which the success (when success, even of any kind, is gained) is just a bare effect of

physical force. Strongly represented that acts of authority and correction should be done without bustle, in a short, calm, decisive manner.

2. How transcendently ridiculous is the excess of the passion of love, when the object is demonstrably a very insignificant one. A young newly-married pair have just been in this neighborhood; the young man was opposed for a while by the girl's father; but, after some time, even the old fellow thought the young one would die, if he were prevented from attaining the object. I could not help asking contemptuously, "And what are the illustrious qualities of this girl? (I had been well informed she was very insignificant.) What is she to be to him, or to do for him? Has she angelic virtue, or extraordinary sense, or vast stores of knowledge, or any other rare, inestimable resources for creating the happiness of an associate?" I could perceive that some of the persons (young ones) before whom I ridiculed this passion, understood me to scorn, and therefore not to comprehend, and to be incapable of feeling, ardent sentimentalism *unconditionally*. I therefore observed that this ridicule is absolutely warranted and rational, when the object of passion does really not possess any of the high and rare qualities; but that on the very same principles a deep passion is dignified and rational, to a certain extent, when the object actually does, in the estimate of sober intelligence, possess distinctions of extraordinary value. It would *not* have been a desertion of reason, and a ridiculous thing, to have felt an enthusiastic passion for Lady Jane Grey. Certainly the excess of feeling which regards a human being as a kind of divinity, is in all possible cases absurd, and therefore either ridiculous or criminal; still this does not prevent that a *great degree* of passion is in some definable cases rational.

3. Walked with a gentleman into a very singular and very beautiful rural scene; was disgusted and amused by his inappropriate and extravagant expressions of admiration;—"glorious," "incomparable," "why this is heaven itself," &c. I could not ascertain whether he really felt any considerable degree of interest, but I thought he did. I could perceive he had not the smallest perception of the distinct *kinds* and *gradations* of beauty, nor of any of the principles and laws of observation. A manufactory is going to be built in this solitary scene; he thought this would be a great improvement to it.

4. Mr. C., a preacher, told me how very tiresome and useless he felt the long visits which he seemed under the necessity of making,—visits including, perhaps, dinner, tea, and supper. I suppose there are hundreds of preachers, and thousands of other reflective persons, who would join in this complaint. It is high time they should be advised to adopt, according to their own convictions of the value and use of time, a decisive time-saving plan, and that the people should be taught the propriety of not censuring such a plan and resolution.

5. Struck exceedingly with the thought, how completely men, for the most part, are and must be confined to their own little spot of this earth,

like the animalculæ belonging to their own particular leaf, or rabbits keeping to their warren. It is a great consolation under this feeling of extreme confinement, that the earth is substantially the same everywhere ; in any distant part which I might wish to see, the earth only consists of earth, grass, trees, hills, stones, waters, &c., with just here and there, indeed, an extraordinary circumstance, as a glacier, a volcano, a vast cataract, a large race of animals, or some remarkable monument of human industry or art. These one should be most happy to see, if one could pass instantaneously from one to another ; but the vast spaces between these constitute the bulk of the world, and are quite of a common order. One may nearly as well be confined to a space of ten square miles as have the power of rapidly expatiating over half a continent.

Interesting subject of speculation.—How men are confined to their own little habitations ; their own little district of fields, paths, brooks (or *one* brook), and hillocks ; their own little circle of acquaintance ; their own little sphere of observation.

What is the use or value of communities, extending beyond actual communication—of states, republics, kingdoms, empires ?

How can we take interest enough in distant beings of our own sort, to feel anything that deserves to be called universal benevolence ? Why did the supreme Disposer put so many beings in one world, under circumstances which necessarily make them strangers to one another ?

Views which strongly realize to the mind the vast multitude of mankind, tend to contract benevolence. The mind seems to say, What can I do with all this crowd ? I cannot keep them in my habitual view ; I cannot extend my affections to a thousand millions of persons who know nothing, and care nothing about me or each other ; I can do them no good, I derive no good from them ; they have all their own concerns, and I have mine ; if I were this moment annihilated it would be all the same to them, and if a whole continent full of them were annihilated, it would be the same to me ;—there is no connection, nor relation, nor sympathy, nor mutual interest between us. I cannot therefore care anything about them ; my affections cannot reach beyond these four or five with whom my own personal interests are immediately connected.

6. What a numberless succession of distressing feelings must attend the life of a person who has some striking deformity. I undesignedly caused one of these feelings lately, when I called in the dusk of the evening, at the house of a poor person in this town, who belongs to our society. There lives with her another poor woman, who supports herself by working in the fields, &c. This woman has, I am told, a very frightful and monstrous configuration of the one side of her face, caused, it is said, by her mother being frightened during pregnancy. She wears always a handkerchief or cloth over this side of her face. Without knowing the woman or the unfortunate circumstance, I observed in the darkness of the evening that the person's face, as she sat by the fire,



was thus partly bound up, and asked the woman of the house, "What is the matter with your friend?" and I saw and regretted the movements indicating confusion and distress in the person in question, while the other was telling me what the matter was. It would be a very benevolent exercise of talent to write a piece in the way of consolation to persons laboring under the affliction of deformity. This may indeed have been already done, if one knew by what author. I remember having read a foolish novel which professed to have this intention. The mode of doing it was, to make the young woman, by a lucky accident, become heiress to the wealth of an old nobleman, amounting to £800,000.

7. (Of preachers.) It is strange to observe how some men, whose *business* is thought and truth, acquire no enlargement, accession, or novelty of ideas, from the course of many years, and a wide scope of experience. It might seem as if they had slept the last twenty years, and now awaked with exactly the same intellectual stock, which they had before they began the nap.

8. In glancing over the movements and local varieties of my past life, I feel a degree of regret to think what an immense number of *pictures* my mind has lost; what a number of views of woods, hills, streams, towns, ruins, human companies, have been before these eyes, and for a while painted on this imagination, which are now quite vanished. Of a great many others I retain but the faintest trace. I am led to this reflection by having just recalled (I do not know what suggested it) the scenes, the persons, the conversation at and about Mr. Chippendale's, in a wild part of Yorkshire, which I have not probably recollected for months or years past. I find this recollection associated (I am totally ignorant why) with another scene which I do not know whether I ever saw in reality or not, and with a third which I did see near Kilkenny or Clonmel, I cannot tell which. It would really have been a good thing to have kept, ever since the earliest youth, a progressive record of all the circumstances and objects which excited great attention at the time, and to have read over this record entirely once or twice every year, in order to retain the images clearly in the mind. Such a plan would have rendered one's retrospect far more distinct than it now is.

9. After reading an hour or two in Shakspeare, with astonishment at the incomparable accuracy, and as it were *tangible relief*, of all his images, I have walked an hour or two more in the act of trying to take on my mind the most perfect perceptions possible of all the surrounding objects and circumstances. Found, and have very often found, that set laborious attention is absolutely necessary to this. I take no images completely, *involuntarily* and *unconsciously*. It is, however, sometimes a good way of taking a *wide general* image, to open the eyes, and let them fix or wander without precisely looking at anything (even when they are fixed) strongly, the while, exerting the mind to seize the whole compass at once of all that can thus come into the eye.

10. Never before so attentively observed, between where I sat and the light, the manner in which the drops of rain fall. They form a vast number of *continuous lines*, and thus have far less the appearance of multitude and confusion, than it would seem that so vast a number must produce. They (these lines) have some little the appearance of falling arrows.

11. Observed a long time, through a small opening in a completely built and closed shed, a cow and calf. The cow advanced her head to the opening to observe *me* too. We looked in each other's face, at a very short distance, a long time, and I indulged a kind of wondering about the nature of our mutual consciousness and thought of each other. (By the way, the mutual recognition of beings of any order, is a very strange and mysterious thing.) I observed the great difference between the degree of intelligence expressed in the eyes and looks of the cow, and in those of the calf. Yet vastly less difference than between the looks of a *human* infant and a mature person.

Observed the beautiful appearance of the numerous shining flexures or wrinkles on the neck and shoulders of the cow. Noticed also, an exquisite beautiful cerulean appearance within the eyes of the calf, in the half-darkness (more than half) of the shed.

Observed that the cow's *attention* was much more *excited* (even when the calf did look at me), and much longer fixed and continued, than that of the calf. (*Vide Journal*, 792.)

12. Have been a thousand times struck, and very forcibly this morning, with the miserable, degraded, and almost revolting appearance, of the visages, both in features and expression, of the lowest rank of the poor, especially when old. Oh, how little is made of the human species in dignity, refinement, knowledge, and happiness, in comparison with what they *might* become, under the influence of good institutions—of education—of religion, and a state of society which should easily secure a competence without so much labor!

13. I have seen the bad effect between a husband and wife, of the one of them pertinaciously retaining some *secret*, as inviolable, which the other knows him or her to possess, and wishes, for the very sake of the pleasure of total union and confidence, to be simply informed of; and which is retained merely for the sake of showing *my* independence—that I can keep a secret—that I have a will of my own—that I will not be *obliged* to tell a thing—or that when I have said I would not tell, I will stand to my word.

My distinctest recollection of this kind is in the case of Mr. and Mrs. ——. Mrs. —— was a widow, and a number of years older than Mr. ——. She, during their courtship, was one time going to tell him her age, for the sake of frankness: he, in a spirit of gallantry, said he would not hear anything about her age; he did not care about her being a little older than himself;—she therefore did not tell him her age. After they were married, perhaps a good while after (they had been married many

years at the time I became acquainted with them), he wished, as a mere matter of friendly, or of slight, curiosity, to know how old she was; she said he had not let her tell this before, and she therefore did not choose to tell him now. This struck him as a somewhat unfriendly thing, and at the same time gave a kind of artificial importance to the secret, *merely* as being a guarded secret. These feelings naturally caused a propensity to recur frequently to this trifling circumstance, with various modes of attempting to elicit the secret; but no, she would keep her secret, that she would—and would defy him ever to learn what he was so curious to know.

I have a number of times seen him either hurt or vexed by her silly obstinacy in retaining this petty mean of plaguing him when he was inclined to be curious. This little dirty feeling of keeping an advantage against him; of having something which she could defy him to obtain was her motive; for nothing at all *depended* on her age, or on his knowing it. How much I despised a woman who could forego one particle of the affection which a kind discarding of all reserve might have excited, for so stupid a kind of pleasure.

14. When we were remarking that vanity is confined to no station, and that there is hardly any accomplishment on which men may not pique themselves, Mr. Hisket told me he knew a man who used to break stones on the road, who was vain in a very high degree of his excellence in this department; he would break a load of stones with any man in England. He added that he had heard a chimney-sweeper indulge in the same boast of superiority, with an appearance of great self-complacency.

It is most mortifying to feel how little the clearest possible perception of a certain class of feelings being both irreligious and despicable, and the clearest possible perception when these feelings rise in the mind; and, in addition, an extreme contempt of these feelings, and of one's self for indulging, and even for being subject to them—how little all this tends to prevent their rising in the mind. This is my own experience in respect of *vanity*, whether as to its pleased or its mortified feelings. Yet I would hope the time will come when I shall feel that these hateful weeds are eradicated. An accurate perception of what feelings *are* vanity, or at least will appear so if disclosed, enables one to preserve an *appearance* tolerably free from the signs of vanity; but under this managed appearance one has the loathsome consciousness how much of the vile feeling there is within. Even at this moment I feel vanity in *having* this accurate perception of what my feelings are, and how they would appear. I feel vanity to think, that probably if a good judge of human nature were casually to see these lines he would say, "How well he understands himself: how far he is from the weakness of being duped by his own mind."\*

\* La vanité est si ancrée dans le cœur de l'homme, qu'un goujat, un mar-

15. One has been amused sometimes, when the one of the domestic associates has advanced an opinion, or recited a supposed fact, which the *other* has thought extremely absurd, to see that other in haste to express his or her contempt of such folly of opinion, or credulity of belief, instead of silently sliding the circumstance or the subject out of conversation, or mildly expressing that he or she cannot entirely concur in opinion or belief, and endeavoring to make as good a retreat as possible for the associate's ignorance or weakness. I say, one has been *amused*; but in some instances one has felt a painful sympathy with the person so treated with scorn by an intimate relative, and before a number of witnesses, each of whom would have politely let pass the unfortunate remark or narration. Striking instances in Mr. and Mrs. —, and Dr. and Mrs. —. Mr. — said, "Oh, nonsense, nonsense, my dear." Dr. — said, "Do make a *little* use of your reason," when his wife told a story which she had heard of Lord somebody having expended £30,000 on a breed of turkeys.

16. Was told of a party of musicians, who heard with indifference the first long-expected account of the victory over the combined fleets, and seemed almost vexed at the interruption. I was disposed to applaud them; as a general principle, men ought to be so intent on their work as to deprecate every interruption, and to feel that *that* is what they have at present to mind.

17. How glad one is this morning that one did not say some things to which an indignant feeling prompted last evening, and which at the time would have appeared to one's judgment as pure justice; but which it is now very easy to see would have been partly unjust and altogether useless, and would have caused a very awkward social embarrassment this morning. How long will it be before one shall attain a state of mind which will permit, at every instant, a luminous and impartial operation of the understanding?

18. Most forcibly struck yesterday while hearing S. G.'s account of the sufferings of his wife (sufferings which she has now endured several years, and of which she has no prospect of a termination, or even relaxation, but by death), with these two considerations:—1. How little one realizes to thought or feeling, the sufferings of others, while one is well one's self. 2. What infinite cogency ought to be felt in the duty of making the best and most indefatigable improvement of health and ease, while they continue to be granted. Oh, what a mass of guilt, on this account, my conscience pronounces on the review of past life.

19. I have just crushed a moth which was hurt by flying near the candle. I have thus demolished a most admirable system of mechanism,

miton, un crocheteur se vante et veut avoir ses admirateurs: et les philosophes même en veulent. Ceux qui écrivent contre la gloire veulent avoir la gloire d'avoir bien écrit; et ceux qui le lisent veulent avoir la gloire de l'avoir lu; et moi qui écris ceci, j'ai peut-être cette envie; et peut-être que ceux qui le liront l'auront aussi.—PASCAL, *Pensées*, Partie I., art. v., 3.

motion, sensation, life. Is the being destroyed? does no finer part survive? is this active, animated creature now consigned to eternal oblivion and unconsciousness?

20. Recollect, in some vulgar instances, the vast difference as to a man's manners, between his being in the immediate sphere of his practice and authority, and out of it. Remarkable instance in the captain of a Dublin and Liverpool packet; instance in a collier at Norton, a kind of foreman. He was quite an unassuming, and what is called sheepish creature in a parlor where I had seen him before, but he was *all man* when seen on his own proper ground; all man, not only in respect of his habitual companions, but in respect of the very identical persons whom he had been so awkward and half-timid with, in the parlor.

21. While Mr. D. was reading a chapter this morning, I had a deep feeling of disliking all social exercises, unless it could be with an individual or two with whom I could feel an entire reciprocation of soul. This was a feeling of *individuality*, not of impiety; and how often I have experienced it, even in the presence of worthy people;—a feeling as if I could wish to vanish out of the room, and find myself walking in some lonely wood. I have a feeling of being still completely insulated, and that therefore the *forms* of a serious sociality are irksome. This is not felt in the public exercises of a congregation, by the official person, because he feels to be occupied in *his own work*, as an *official and insulated individual*, and not as one of the large and heterogeneous company. His sympathies are not seeking to mingle with all the beings who are present, in the same manner as they feel as if they ought to do, when it is only a small domestic party.

22. I know not how to bring into intelligible description a feeling which I have many times been obscurely conscious of having, and particularly in two or three instances of late;—a feeling of revolting when I find myself coming into anything like intimate, confiding kindness (I have no reference to any kind of personalities whatever) with persons, however worthy and kind, if they are not the individual or two with whom my intimacy can be congenial and entire. It is a part and an operation of the same feeling which would recoil from the direct personalities of love with any one that was not the absolute *object* of love. It is a noble law that (in the case of a refined and reflective mind at least) all the symbols that of right belong to tenderness are felt to be out of place with any one but a real *object* of tenderness.

23. Wesley's moderation in sleep, and his rigid constancy in rising early, being mentioned in the company of Mr. Bradburn, who travelled with Wesley almost constantly for years, he said that Wesley generally slept several hours in the course of the day; that he had himself seen him sleep three hours together often enough. This was chiefly in his carriage, in which he accustomed himself to sleep on his journeys, and in which he slept as regularly, as easily, and as soundly, as if he had gone to bed. A zealous, ignorant Methodist, who considered Wesley as alto-

gether an angel, was most indignant at hearing this said by Mr. S., who heard Bradburn say it, and exclaimed, "Bradburn must be a liar!"

24. Have been looking a little while in the parish register of this town, which begins in the first year of Elizabeth. I felt something venerable, by its antiquity, even in such a dull thing as this. The impression is from reflecting that all these persons (those recorded, and those who recorded them, in the earlier part) are so long since dead; and that so many of the things, and persons, and events, that we look back upon as long since gone, were posterior to the birth or marriage here recorded.

25. Had a most beautiful evening walk, and a diversity of views. From an eminence overlooked a wide extent of wood, the soft, moulded forms of the superficies of which were inexpressibly beautiful;—distant country, remote hills and horizon, setting sun, the *White Horse*, the venerable memorial of Alfred, which I looked upon with an emotion which few other monuments could cause. There was a most enchanting softness spread over the whole view of heaven and earth, which gradually faded into the sombre, and then the gloom of evening.

26. I am privileged to see one more night of surpassing beauty;—a moonlight night, with a gentle, unequal gale, in an August so temperate, and so wet with delicious rains, that the *intense* green of the earth is perceptible by this moonlight. I feel an earnest wish to seize such a view of nature, and fix it in my mind, even for ever. It is a very noble luxury to see such aspects of solemn beauty; and I will not be ungrateful nor neglectful.

27. Have been reading a most awful account of an eruption of Vesuvius; how far correct is one of the feelings caused by this description? namely this; a feeling as if the actions of man, in a *moral* view, and in the sight of the Creator, could scarcely be of any manner of consequence; the creature as a physical being appearing so inconceivably insignificant, so despicable, so much on a level with the smallest reptile, when he and his powers, &c., are placed in thought beside these enormous natural phenomena and powers.

But the feeling cannot be right when it goes the length, as I feel it inclined to do, of annihilating all difference between virtue and vice, in the way of asking, What signifies it what *thoughts*, as they are called, this despicable animalcule entertains in what he calls his mind? what signifies it into what articulations he may form the trivial sound which he calls his voice, in uttering what he calls speech? what can it signify in what manner he uses his insect *limbs* in what he calls action, and sometimes *conduct*? what signifies all the trivial action, thought, speech, and existence itself of such an atom, that he should deem himself under some sublime law of accountableness to the infinite Spirit, and that there should be an awful distinction between moral good and evil in such an agent?

At the same time how prodigiously it would modify one's manner of

thinking, on almost all subjects, if it were possible to retain strongly in the mind the *grand* class of ideas, and that standard, that kind of general measure for perceiving the magnitude of all objects, which would result from the mind having taken its pitch and level, so to speak, in this elevated region. (How vilely this is expressed!) I mean simply to say, that the mind, while expanded and elevated by the contemplation of these grand subjects, perceives many things to be little, which at other times it views as important; and if it could be kept habitually in this state of expansion and elevation, it would acquire a grand standard according to which it would perceive, and measure, and estimate, all these objects. In its expressions and representations, therefore, it would express as trivial many things which, for want of this high standard, it regards and speaks of as great and important. Yet those who read or heard its sentiments would not feel coincident, because they would not have in *their* minds this grand standard for measuring little and great. But to a great extent, truth and justice (intellectual justice) require this to be done. A man *should*, as far as he can, make *his* standard of the proportions of things the same as the standard of the universe. But alas! what a despicable atom, and almost infinitely less than an atom, he appears in this very attempt of thinking according to the grand scale of proportions.

But still, things may be great or little, with respect to *the wants, interests, and happiness* of man, though they be all inexpressibly and equally little and trivial with respect to the universe, and as measured on the degrees of its grand scale or standard. This is the standard according to which we *must* chiefly think. Yet still *something* of this kind should be done.

Quote one of my own sentences,—“We have often talked of this bold quality (decision of character), and feel its *extreme importance*,” —“*extreme importance!*” Vain words!—*extreme importance* in what determines the movements of a microscopical tadpole, called *man*! Such will be the just remark while applying the *grand standard*. But then, *by the standard of human interests*, which substantially after all must be the standard chiefly referred to and used, by this standard of *our own*, the thing is important.

Perhaps after all, there is but little real analogy between the *physical* and the *moral* standard of great and little; perhaps not enough to warrant our drawing from the one any measures by which to judge of the things belonging to the other. Taken as a mere physical agent, *MAN*, compared to the physical powers and grandeur of a *volcano* is infinitely little and despicable; but it is not in his physical powers and being that man finds his true value; he is an intellectual and moral agent, and if the phenomena and qualities of *this* moral and intellectual being could possibly be justly compared by means, if it existed, of any intermediate principle and common measure of proportions, with the grand physical phenomena of an earthquake, a stormy ocean, or a volcano, those moral

phenomena might prove much the more grand.\* Perhaps, according to that *Divine standard*, which is the ultimate abstraction of all relations, analogies, measures, and proportions, and in which the laws and principles of the natural world and those of the moral, are resolved in the same (are in their original undivided essence), the grandeur of a virtue may be as great, or much greater than that of a volcano, the mischief of a vice as great as that of an earthquake.

While reading this tremendous account of Vesuvius (and as long as it is forcibly remembered), how contemptible appears my own comparison of the valor and anger of Homer's heroes to Vesuvius.† Achilles like Vesuvius!! How impossible to have made such a comparison, if I had composed those sentences while under the full impression of the account I have just now read, of the awful phenomena of one of the eruptions of Vesuvius (in Dr. Gregory's *Economy of Nature*). But yet, is it absurd in regard to the ideas of the reader, who probably has not in his mind, any more than the writer had in his, a grand habitual idea of the volcano? to him it will be but strong enough, and he will feel no extravagance. Whereas, had some much inferior thing been mentioned (as a furnace for instance), it would have appeared quite feeble, and almost despicable, as a parallel to Achilles and Diomedes. We do injustice to almost everything we mention; our ideas are infinitely less (if it is any sublime object at least) than the thing itself.

\* L'homme n'est qu'un roseau le plus faible de la nature, mais c'est un roseau pensant. Il ne faut pas que l'univers entier s'arme pour l'écraser. Une vapeur, une goutte d'eau suffit pour le tuer. Mais quand l'univers l'écraserait, l'homme serait encore plus noble que ce qui le tue, parce qu'il sait qu'il meurt; et l'avantage que l'univers a sur lui, l'univers n'en sait rien. Ainsi toute notre dignité consiste dans la pensée. C'est de là qu'il faut nous relever, non de l'espace et de la durée. Travaillons donc à bien penser; voilà la principe de la morale.—PASCAL, *Pensées*, Partie I., art. iv., 6.

† "Let this susceptible youth, after having mingled and burned in imagination among heroes, whose valor and anger flame like Vesuvius, who wade in blood, trample on dying foes, and hurl defiance against earth and heaven; let him be led into the company of Jesus Christ and his disciples, as displayed by the evangelists, with whose narration, I will suppose, he is but slightly acquainted before."—*Essay on the Aversion of Men of Taste to Evangelical Religion. Letter V.*



## CHAPTER V.

RESIDENCE AT BOURTON ON-THE-WATER—VISIT TO FROME—ECLECTIC REVIEW—BIRTH OF HIS SON—EXCURSION INTO NORTH WALES—VISIT TO BRISTOL AND FROME—HALL'S PREACHING—DEATH OF HIS PARENTS—DOMESTIC HABITS—REMOVAL TO DOWNEND.

1808-1817.

MR. FOSTER'S marriage took place in May, 1808. In one of his earliest letters after this event, addressed to a highly esteemed friend\* at Frome, he says, "If the distance of some miles and some months could obliterate from my own mind all regard for persons with whom I have passed so many agreeable and animated hours, I ought to conclude, that I am myself no longer remembered with kindness at the Iron-Gates, or at the cottage; but as I experience no such effect of time and distance, I will not let myself believe it is experienced by my friends, especially as probably less alteration has taken place in their circumstances than in mine; unless, indeed, my good friend Miss S. has by this time been (where I have repeatedly warned you, there was danger of her going) to Greta Green. In this last case, I fear that she at least will have quite forgotten me, whereas I, after an adventure somewhat of this kind, have a very faithful and friendly remembrance of her. I seem to have so little more to tell about myself in consequence of the change of situation caused by that adventure, that I clearly perceive those adventurers who fill large volumes with their own story, must make very large use of fiction; and that a book which I have just been reading, written by a very plain-sailing gentleman of the name of Patrick Gass, who narrates a grand voyage of discovery, across the continent of North America to the Pacific Ocean, and back again, in a rather thin octavo, is the very standard for all, who in relating their own adventures are determined to tell nothing but what is new, and nothing but what is true. For myself, indeed, if I will tell nothing

\* Mrs. John Sheppard, August 3, 1808.

but what is true, I must tell nothing at all that is new, for as to saying, that I am happy in the changed situation, that is but the same thing that a tolerable number of millions of men have said of themselves when they had been married hardly three months.

“If I were a young man, I should very likely be saying with a prompt and sanguine confidence,—‘Well, and why may not a man who can be happy with an associate three months, assure himself of a similar happiness, if they should live three years, or even thirty years?’ But I am old enough to be well aware how many people who are wiser than myself, would laugh at the romantic cast of such a presumption, and shall therefore keep the notion to myself.

“My habits in this new residence are sober, quiet, and recluse, to the last degree. I will answer for it, there is not a mouse that haunts any bank, or brake, or barn in this county, that is seldomer seen than I am, or that runs more instantly into its hiding-place, if it should happen to meet any eye, even that of a cat. My life when at Wall-bridge was perfect dissipation, as to the article of visiting, compared with what it is now; but I do not, therefore, insinuate it is a life of industry: excepting a quantity of reading, there has been but a miserably small portion of work done since I came hither, and since I entered the house in which I am now writing; I am vowing, however, and almost beginning to mend.”

“Nobody in the village,” he tells another friend,\* “except the sick or lame, has kept so well at home, as we have done the last ten weeks. We almost literally go no whither, but to meeting on the Sunday, and a short walk into the fields sometimes in the evenings of the other days. I believe we are thought the strangest people in the place, and it is very convenient to me they should think so. But they think this stay-at-home fondness, this being so satisfied with each other, will in due time have had its day, and leave us to wish for the assistance of our neighbors to help us drag on the tediousness of life. They are not, however, apprised, what a vast number of quarto and octavo books there are yet on the shelf, or likely to come there. Till a tolerable share of these are conquered, we must make shift to endure each other’s company alone, as well as we can.” In another letter,† he describes the village as being “the one place in the world where nothing can be said to happen in the whole course of the year; nothing that is worth telling at the distance of five miles off.” “This,” he adds,

\* To Mrs. Gowing, Aug. 1, 1808.

† July 3, 1809.

is perhaps a very good thing to say of a place, when one considers how much that is remarkably bad takes place in most other towns and villages. To have nothing remarkable to say of the events of a place, where there are a good many people, is surely some proof that Satan is not so active there, as in some other of his haunts. There are several places round at no great distance, where a far greater number of notable incidents are constantly occurring to help out the talk and scandal of society. Bourton is hardly good or bad enough to make it worth while that half a dozen sentences should be uttered or written about it."

Mr. Hughes spent two days at Bourton in August, and then, accompanied by his friend, set off for Cheltenham. "After staying about a day," Foster tells his parents,\* "we walked to Gloucester (nine miles), and went by coach to Thornbury, eleven miles from Bristol. It was near the end of the week; Hughes was to be in Bristol on the Sunday, and I proposed going with him, but on the Saturday it was heard, that a good old minister, who was to have come to preach at Thornbury on the following day, had suddenly died that morning. I therefore stayed and preached twice. I had not preached there before for perhaps eight years.† On the Sunday evening I walked to Bristol with two of the Bristol students, one of whom is nephew to Mr. Hall, and of the same name.‡ He had been lately to see Mr. Hall, and I did not fail to make many inquiries about him, as I have also done from other quarters. As to his mind, he has been perfectly well a long time, but his health is greatly oppressed, by an almost continual pain in his side and back, to which he has been much subject almost all his life. . . . He is said to preach incomparable sermons still, and is likely to remain at Leicester, a very dull place, by no means adapted to such a man, who ought to be in some one of the three or four principal towns in England. In Bristol, I saw Mr. Bogue, Dr. Ryland, and others. . . . I was two or three days about Downend, and was kept in almost continual motion, in order to call on each of the persons whose houses I used to visit when a resident there. Most of them I found as well as when I lived there, though some of the aged persons are declining, and a few are dead. I went with Hughes to Bath, where he preached on a week day evening for Mr. Jay, in whose company we passed

\* Sept. 1, 1808.

† Probably the visit mentioned in the Journal, No. 764, v. p. 150.

‡ The late Rev. John Keene Hall, M.A., of Kettering

a number of hours. He retains quite undiminished his extreme popularity, and his inflexible sobriety and excellence. . . . Hughes accompanied me to Frome, though he was not able to stay there more than half a day: he left me and returned to Bristol. His health is now firm; his mind is active, and he is kept in almost continual exertion by his concern in the Bible Society, the Tract Society, the Hibernian Society, the Surrey Mission, and various and frequent preaching, besides his regular employment on the Sunday. His religious opinions and devotional habits are quite established, his talents have attained their full maturity, and, both from nature and constant exercise, he has very great facility and quickness of thought and expression. . . .

“At Frome I was received with the most animated kindness, both among the richer and poorer class of my acquaintance,—a kindness to which I could not make an adequate return in the way of giving much of my company, as I had determined not to stay more than three days. I felt the propriety, even as a matter of appearance, of not being like a rambler from home, besides the impatience of affection to be again with my dear domestic associate. I returned to her at the time I had determined, found her well, and was welcomed with inexpressible tenderness. The felicity of thus rejoining her seemed to me to exceed even the joy of being first united to her. Nearly four months have now elapsed since that time, and on both sides the affectionate complacency has very sensibly increased. We both every day express our gratitude to Heaven for having given us to each other; and we hope that it will continue a cause of the most lively gratitude as long as we live, and also in a state after death. I most entirely believe that no man on earth has a wife more fondly affectionate, more anxious to promote his happiness, or more dependent for her own on his tenderness for her. In the greatest number of opinions, feelings, and concerns, we find ourselves perfectly agreed; and when anything occurs on which our judgments and dispositions differ, we find we can discuss the subject without violating tenderness, or in the least losing each other's esteem, even for a moment. Greater trials of our mutual affection and respect than any that have yet occurred will undoubtedly arise in the course of life, if it is considerably protracted; but the experiment thus far has given us a stronger confidence in the perpetuity of tenderness and harmony than it was possible for us to have, previously to any experiment at all.”

Foster's connection with the Eclectic Review has been mentioned in the preceding chapter. From the period of his settlement at Frome, he became one of the most frequent contributors to that journal, which for several years was the only one in this country that combined the advocacy of "spiritual Christianity" with liberal views on social and political questions. At its commencement churchmen and dissenters were united in its support, on the understanding that the points at issue between them were not to be brought under discussion. It soon, however, became evident that a neutrality which would exclude from animadversion not only the abstract question of religious establishments, but all abuses, past and present, which might attach to our social institutions, would narrow the freedom of discussion to a degree that, in a nation so practical as ours, would deprive the Review of all interest to persons holding decided opinions. Against this equivocal and undignified position which even then, and still more in later years, would be so unsatisfactory to earnest minds, Mr. Foster made frequent and pointed remonstrances, which, combined with the tone of several of his articles, contributed to a settlement of the journal on a Nonconformist basis. In a letter to the editor, after alluding to certain clergymen who were concerned in the management of the Review, he says, "It is utterly impossible to keep on terms with them, I am persuaded, but at the cost of injuring the character of the Review for anything like spirit and independence. You may be very sure they will not only require that we do not condemn an establishment, or the English establishment, in the abstract, but that we do not presume to touch the abominable corruptions of the actual condition of that church; not only that we do not declare against what is called the British constitution, but also that we be very respectful to the actual government and administration, whatever it may be." "I meant to have added," he writes again, "to the end of Macdiarmid,\* some good sentences in continuation and conclusion of the remark that our being pledged to let alone the question of the Establishment is not a pledge to let vile men and vile measures go free *because* they have belonged, or may at any time belong to the established church. This would be to make and acknowledge the church, just as it was literally in popish times, the asylum of miscreants, who had only just to get within its walls to laugh at all the agents

\* Vide Contributions, &c., vol. i., pp. 224-225, or Eclectic Review, October and November, 1808.

of justice. But this palpable distinction will probably not be admitted by any high-church readers, that may condescend to notice the Review, and therefore either they must be disregarded, or the Review must shift to live in a state of miserable subjugation, despised by those who must be, after all, the resource of anything that dares to be free and to promote freedom. For it is to me as clear as the sunshine in which I am writing, that nothing of an useful work of this kind will ever succeed that does not substantially please the dissenters. And this may be done without the slightest approach toward anything like forward declaration in their favor ; but it absolutely never can be done by a trembling, reverential forbearance on all subjects relating to the corruptions, and tyranny, and wicked men involved in the history and practice of the church and state. There absolutely must be something to express an abhorrence of star-chambers, St. Bartholomews, and the principle of non-resistance. And besides the question of policy, should not a work, which pretends to be the free and absolutely independent advocate of truth and justice, be anxious to lend a hand against some of the most pernicious evils that ever infested the world ? Of what diminutive consequence is the correction of any mere literary errors and faults, compared with a manly resistance of those notions and that spirit which have made prisoners, wanderers, exiles, or martyrs, of the best and wisest of mankind ; which have sanctioned the despotism of the vilest governments, and which still are strongly operating in the same way, even in this country ? Look at France, the whole intellectual being and discipline of which is now submitted to a system of instruction wholly prescribed by a tyrant ; everything should be done in every country, not yet totally enslaved, to avert so melancholy a destiny, towards which we have, of late years, been virtually very fast approaching in this country. If the 'supporters' have no hope of supporting the Eclectic Review, without a sacrifice of this free and courageous quality, let them lay down their thankless undertaking, and let some other men be sought to undertake a really bold and free work which should in its prospectus declare, in so many words, that the Bible is to be held sacred, but nothing else on earth ;—that all subjects whatever are considered as free for discussion ;—and that all systems, institutions, and practices, as being merely of human authority, are fully open to the exercise of human reason. The 'supporters' may hobble on a while under their weight, but they

may depend upon it, that without gaining the cordial approbation of dissenters and independent thinkers, they will sink at last ; for as to their church friends, they will never help them on without some more settled and distinct pledges and proofs of servitude and obsequiousness.

“ What a stupid thing it was to begin a thing on such a plan ! They wisely thought, I suppose, that the whole business of preserving neutrality was confined just to two or three bare questions, and that these could evidently be easily avoided. They could not see that this question of neutrality would necessarily extend to ten thousand things in the course of general reasoning and criticism ; that it would interfere in all works of history, of political economy, of biography, of theories of government, of political and ecclesiastical controversy, of missionary designs, of education, of rights of conscience, and of discussion of present parties, measures, and expectations.”

When Mr. Foster relinquished the pastoral office at Frome, it was with the painful apprehension that his labors as a Christian minister were finally closed ; but, within little more than a year after his marriage, the morbid affection in his throat had so far diminished as to allow of his once more speaking in public. “ During the summer and earlier autumn,” he says,\* “ I preached every Sunday here and there, and generally twice ; the last month or two has not been quite so busy, though I have probably never had two unemployed Sundays together. The every Sunday service recalled somewhat of the complaint, which expelled me from a regular pulpit. I am become accustomed to pulpits, desks, stools, blocks, and all sorts of pedestal elevations.” At a later period he informs his mother, “ I am returned from another expedition to preach, at a considerable distance, which has taken up several days. Since I wrote to you last, I have gone to preach at two villages or towns, where I had never been before. On reckoning up the number of places in the circuit of neighborhood at which I have preached since I came to reside here, I find it amounts to *fourteen*—several of them within three or four miles of this village, and several of them as far off as twelve or fourteen miles. Many of these are small congregations, and several of them consisting chiefly of poor people. . . I am pleased so far with having the means of doing any small degree of good, and feel it an advantage that I am in circumstances to enable me to preach for

\* To Mr. Hughes, Nov. 21, 1809.

nothing. This circumstance gives some additional weight to a man's religious instructions, especially in some of the ignorant places where the people are industriously taught by the clergy; and other enemies of the dissenters, that there is some self-interested object in view, in all this busy activity in going about to preach. I everywhere meet with civility, decent behavior, and often very friendly attention. . . . It must be acknowledged in behalf of the clergy themselves, that they do not attempt in any active manner to thwart or incommode us. They let us alone, except now and then railing a little at us from their pulpits, and in their convivial meetings. And in this we hear that the one or two of a more serious stamp are not behind-hand with the rest, disliking dissenters as *such*, just as much as the more profligate ones dislike the dissenters as religious. And indeed, all over England, I believe that in general the evangelical clergy are found very great bigots, with here and there a rare exception."

Foster's domestic life, so full of satisfaction in its chief relation, acquired additional interest by the birth of a son, in January, 1810. He acknowledges the congratulations of one of his friends on the event in the following terms: "You have my thanks for all the good wishes and congratulatory expressions in which you have manifested your benevolence. I am willing to adopt, as far as I possibly can, your opinion, that it is the parents' fault if the children are not causes of satisfaction, ultimately, rather than vexation. In the case in question, there will in all probability be a more systematical, and a more agreeing and co-operating endeavor to prevent evil, and communicate good, than in the great majority of instances; and indeed this may be, and no great merit neither, for education always appears to me as the one thing which, taken generally, is the most vilely managed on earth. If the fellow turns out *good*, I shall not so much mind about his being extra clever. It is goodness that the world is wretched for wanting; and if all were good, none would need to be able. I am willing to hope, that by the time he comes to be a man, if that should ever be, the world will be a little better than it is at present, and will have made a perceptible advance toward that state in which talents will be little wanted. It is at the same time needless to say, that it would be gratifying that a son should have some qualifications for being an agent in the happy process. Physically, the chap is deemed, I understand, as promising as his neighbors. My wife is still extremely well for the time, and I



hope will soon be restored to her full health and strength. It is she that I care fifty times more about than I should about any infant. It is only by time and habit that a young child becomes in any great degree interesting to a man, especially a man never in the least accustomed to such children. The young fellow has not yet been thought worth calling by any name. My sisters-in-law do not approve of either Adam or Cain, and one does not like to expose one's self to a veto a third time. If he is lucky enough to get any name at last, I should not wonder if it were to be, according to your injunction, John." To another friend he says, "Though I like female children better than boys, I am better pleased that this is a boy, because a boy, if he grows up with good faculties and good principles, can be made more extensively an agent than a female of even the same faculties and principles; and also it appears but too probable, the age we are entering on may be a very rugged one, and such that benevolence might almost wish that there might be nothing but men to suffer its calamities."

In the summer of 1812, Foster made an excursion into North Wales, in company with Mr. and Mrs. Stokes of Worcester, and two other friends. "Ever since the visit to Bristol and Frome," he tells Mr. Hughes, "I have been treading my little quiet routine of reading, light criticism, and village preaching, with most exemplary uniformity, with one capital exoeption indeed, of superlative interest, an excursion through North Wales. The delight with which I contemplated the magnificent scenery was ardent almost up to the degree of poetry, even notwithstanding a most incommodious lameness which I incurred on one of the earliest days, and retained to the last from a formidable crush of my foot by rolling a stone among the mountains. The only bad effect that now remains is a certain debility, which will continue for a while, probably, to incapacitate me for any very long walks, if I were inclined, or had occasion to attempt them. The impression I retain from what I saw, creates a decided intention, should life and health be prolonged, to see these sublime objects yet again, and to take longer time to explore some of the most interesting of the localities, especially the region round Snowdon, which imperial eminence I ascended at midnight, and saw the rising of the sun from its summit. . . . This excursion was undertaken (by me) really and truly much more with a view to diversify

my ideas, and lay in some stock in the imagination, than from any calculation of the mere pleasure of beholding.”\*

In August, 1815, he visited Bristol and Frome, accompanied by Mrs. Foster. Referring to his friends at the latter place, he says, “I revisited at their houses a number of the good people I had once preached to, especially the poor people, who manifested a lively pleasure in seeing me again. A strange number are dead of those whom I knew when I lived there. The oldest and most estimable, however, of my former friends there still lives, and looks well, and is very cheerful, in her eightieth year. She is a person of the rich and what is called genteel class, but of most extraordinary piety and beneficence. I hope she may yet survive a few years, a blessing to the poor, and an example to the rich. In that town the disposition for hearing about religion is increasing, in a degree beyond anything I have known elsewhere. There must be at least two thousand more attendants at places of worship than there were at the time I was in the town; and even at that time I considered it as surpassing, in the proportion of inhabitants so attending, any other place within my knowledge. . . . The grand attraction at Bristol was the preaching of Mr. Hall, who happened to be on a visit there, and preached three Sundays. I contrived to hear him several times, and was glad to have the opportunity, as I had never heard him but twice or three times before. . . . The last sermon I heard him preach, which dwelt much on the topic of *living in vain*, made a more powerful impression on my mind than, I think, any one I ever heard. And this was not simply from its being the most eloquent sermon, unquestionably, that I ever heard, or probably ever shall hear, but from the solemn and alarming truth which it urged and pressed on the conscience, with the force of a tempest. . . . I suppose every intelligent person has the impression, in hearing him, that he surpasses every other preacher probably in the whole world. In the largest congregation there is an inconceivable stillness and silence while he is preaching, partly indeed owing to his having a weak, low voice, though he is a strong, large-built man; but very much owing to that commanding power of his mind, which holds all other minds in captivity, while within reach of his voice. He has no tricks of art and oratory, no studied gesticulations, no ranting, no pompous declamation. His elo-

\* To Mr. Hughes, September 1, 1812.

quence is the mighty power of spirit, throwing out a rapid series of thoughts—explanatory, argumentative, brilliant, pathetic, or sublime—sometimes all these together. And the whole manner is simple, natural, grave, sometimes cool, often impetuous and ardent. He seems always to have a complete dominion over the subject on which he is dwelling, and over the subjects, on every side, to which he adverts for illustration. He has the same pre-eminent power in his ordinary conversation as in his preaching. What is best in the account, the power of religion is predominant over every other power in his mind. A devotional spirit is very conspicuous in his religious exercises, and is said, by those who know him best, to be the habitual character of his mind. I was in his company a number of times.”

It has been already noticed that Mr. Foster's father died in 1814. “Before an advanced period of old age, it was at the beginning of each new year his earnest desire, as far as compatible with submission to the divine will, that it might be his last ; so that I have no doubt,” his son observed to a friend, “that he entered on twenty successive years with this desire expressed in prayer.” Mrs. Foster survived her husband to the close of 1816, and during this interval of widowhood, her son not only, as he had uniformly done during his father's lifetime, contributed liberally to lessen the pressure of outward circumstances, but by writing more frequently than before, endeavored with the most sedulous affection to cheer her loneliness, and alleviate the increasing infirmities of age. Foster's last visit to his parents was in the autumn of 1801, and at that time he said of them, “they fear not death, nor need to fear it ; for they are eminently ripe for heaven. I have never met with a piety more entire and sublime.”

During his residence at Bourton, his family was increased by the birth of five children, of whom two died in infancy. Some of his private habits, and the tenor of his domestic life, will be best understood from the following sketches by himself in his letters to his mother. “I have not yet begun my usual winter-practice of rising before the beginning of day-light in the morning ; but it is quite time to resume it, and I intend to do so to-morrow morning. I shall also begin to have a fire in this cold garret. All this dozen years I have always done everything about my own fire myself ; and I believe nobody can much excel me in that business ; most certainly no one can in the art of keeping a fire alive with the least consumption of fuel. This is a very requisite art,

for coals are very dear here, being all brought from a great distance. There is therefore no such thing as what you call *raking* the fire and keeping it in all night. We have always to light anew in the morning, by means of a tinder-box, and a handful of shavings and sticks. It is literally scarcely more than a handful that I make use of for making mine. Our coals, however, are good. But in burning, they never, like yours, acquire a sort of pitchy softness, and run into large lumps of cinder.

“I wish I could perform every other part of my employments as well as I can make a fire; and that I had ever learnt to be as economical of *time* as of coals. But this I have not yet learnt, during all these years that my time has been passing away. I have it still to learn practically, now that so much less a portion of my life, in all probability, remains behind, than that which is expended. I am most deeply mortified to think the case should be so, and sometimes am tempted to despair of its being mended. *But despair cannot be any part of my duty.* I still must hope, and resolve, and pray, and endeavor.

“Hardly any man has his time so much at his command in one sense, as I have;—no visiting scarcely—very little travelling—very little letter-writing—very little business to transact. I should have made, under such circumstances, ten times greater acquisitions and improvements than I have; and should have performed much more that should turn to the account of public utility, of one sort or another. I am often at once grateful and ashamed in comparing my lot with that of many men, who would be glad to attend to intellectual pursuits, but are harassed with business, and worn down with cares and vexations; or have some one uniform, constant, severely laborious employment to attend to,—for example, teaching a school; which, at former periods of my life, I thought of as likely to be my own employment for perhaps a great part of my life. Even preaching is a much less laborious thing in my way of performing it, than it is in the case of a settled minister, who has to preach three or four times a-week, and habitually to the same people. My preaching is here and there, and for the most part in places where I do not much mind regular preparation, but *talk* three quarters of an hour to the people, in any strain of thought that I can call up at the time. I have oftener than not, however, a small piece of paper under my eyes, because I have so wretched a memory. But I take no such

aid in preaching in two or three of the villages on a Sunday evening.

"In one way and another, I have all manner of books at my command, and can see newspapers every day. By such means I have been enabled, in a measure, to avoid the disadvantages otherwise inevitable in such an out-of-the-world situation. I habitually see as much as five or six of the periodical reviews. So that I can learn nearly whatever I want to be informed of, as to the course of literature, and of the general affairs of society. I even sometimes feel that too much time is spent in this kind of reading. Very much less would not, however, have well sufficed for the pursuit of that sort of business which has so considerably occupied me now for many years.

"My wife and the brats are still well. Those brats are just now making a great noise, and running about to make themselves warm, in the house under me. I have noticed the curious fact of the difference of the effect of what other people's children do and one's own. In the situations I have formerly been in, any great noise and racket of children would have extremely incommoded me, if I wanted to read, think, or write. But I never mind, as to any such matter of convenience, *how much* din is made by *these* brats, if it is not absolutely in the room where I am at work. When I am with them I am apt to make them, and join in making them, make a still bigger tumult and noise; so that their mother sometimes complains that we all want whipping together. As to liking freaks and vivacity, I do not feel myself much older than I was twenty years since. I have a great dislike to all stiff, and formal, and unnecessary gravity; if it were not so, I should be to children quite an old man, and could have no easy companionship with them. It must be a great evil for parents to have with their children an immoveable, puritanical solemnity, especially when the disproportion in age is so unusually great as in my case. But I feel no tendency to this; of course, to avoid it is no matter of effort or self-denial.

"I shall not, after some little time longer, know well what to do with John. One shall be very reluctant to send him to school at a distance from home, wherever that may be; and yet there is no doing much good, except in extraordinary cases, in the way of regular pursuit of learning, without the advantage of companions of a boy's own age, and the systematic employment which cannot be enforced anywhere so effectually as in a school. I am

hoping we may remove to some situation where there may be a good school just at hand, that he might attend during the day, and return home at night.”\*

“I am sitting alone in my long garret, in which I spend a considerable part of every day, excepting the days on which I go out to preach. Here I have a little fire, and, excepting along the middle of the floor, the room is crowded and loaded with papers and books, intermingled with dust that is never swept away. Along this middle space of the floor, I walk backward and forward, as much as several hours every day; for I cannot make much of thinking and composing without walking about, a habit that I learnt early in my musing life. Formerly I used to walk about the fields for hours together, indulging imaginations and reflections, thinking of myself and innumerable other objects, reviewing past life, and forming plans or vows for the future. Since I came to this village, I have walked in the fields in this way comparatively but little; this garret has served me instead. I have been more in habits of such kind of study as required to have books and pens at hand. But, nevertheless, I probably walk not much less than I did when it was in the open air. It would be a marvellous number of miles, if it could be computed how far I have walked on this floor. It would be a length that would reach to the other side of the globe. If all my musing walks, since I was twenty years old, could be computed together, it would not unlikely be a length that would go several times round the globe.

“I seem as if I could hardly believe that *eight* years, within a few weeks, have really passed away, since I began to frequent this same garret—a time which I can look back to as if it were but a few months since. This space bears a very material and serious proportion to a whole life of moderate length. And then, too, when it happens to be, as it has been in my case, the meridian portion of life, the part at which life attains its highest maturity, and is preceding, at no great distance, the period of decline, it may be regarded as a portion of higher value than perhaps the same length of time in any other part of life; unless we except the space between the ages of twenty and thirty. Thus regarding it as immensely valuable, and now all past, I cannot but feel some very solemn reflections and emotions, in which regret bears

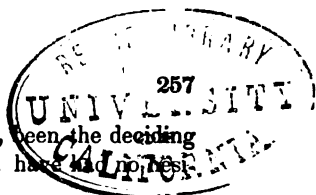
\* To his Mother, Nov., 1815.

a very prominent share. Conscience admonishes me to how much more effectual purpose these years might have been expended. Gratitude to the divine forbearance and the divine bounty claims also a large part in the sentiments with which I ought to dwell on the review. Whatever time is yet to come before death shall shut up the account, may the divine grace enable me to improve it in a far nobler manner ; so that, *if* I should live another eight years, I may at the end of it be able to say, with animated gratitude, 'how much more valuable a portion of my life this has practically been than the preceding eight years, or indeed than *any* preceding portion of my life.' I do humbly trust, that the more or less time to come will really be of this improved character, in whatever place that time may be spent."\*

Towards the close of 1817 Mr. Foster left Bourton, and became once more a resident and stated preacher at Downend. "It is not without very great hesitation," he informs his friend Mr. Stokes, "that I have come to the conclusion to accept an invitation to preach regularly at Downend, four miles from Bristol ; a place where I was stationed in the same service as much as fourteen or sixteen years since ; but where it is striking to observe how many persons, who then formed a part of the congregation, do not appear in it now, nor in any other on earth. Those that do remain profess to have retained a friendly recollection of me during the protracted interval, and for several of them I have always retained a most sincere kindness.

"There is a small proportion of highly-cultivated individuals, contrasted, however, so decidedly with the *perfectly* rustic state and character of the great majority, as to constitute an incommodious kind of congregation, since what would seem requisite to please the few, would be of little or no use to the greater number. The style of preaching must, however, at all events, be endeavored to be adapted to the latter. Indeed, the circumstance that has decided me to enter on the undertaking is precisely my having had, for a good while, the design of trying what may be practicable in the way of adapting sermons to such rustics ; sermons made on a plan of combining perfect simplicity and intelligibility, even a degree of obviousness, with what shall have as much as possible of novelty or originality in the way of illustration. I am but very little sanguine as to this plan ; but its having been

\* To his Mother, Jan., 1816.



a matter of intended experiment has, I repeat, been the deciding point in the present case; but for this I should have had no hesitation to decline the situation.

"No doubt an additionally deciding consideration has been, that, declining this station, I might perhaps *never* reside near Bristol at all, nor perhaps for years to come, should life continue, remove to the neighborhood of any large place, however convinced—as for many years back I have been convinced—that *here* I am a good deal too much, for the most useful improvement, out of the way of seeing what we call the *world*. While I have had an uniform preference for Bristol, I have yet dreaded coming to any positive determination of removing thither under the character of a *preacher unengaged*. The summonses which I might be liable to have, when a preacher happened on any Sunday to be wanting, would, if at all frequent, have been extremely incommodious to me, unless I had made a rule to refuse uniformly, which would not have comported with the sense of duty. They would have been incommodious from the size of the places, and from the necessity of employing more time than I could easily spare in preparations. As the case will *now* be, I shall have my own regular engagement, and that not so onerous as such occasional services would be, if frequent.

"It is, however, quite of the nature of an experiment in a *physical* respect. I am not confident that the old debility of the organs affected by speaking may not return in the degree to forbid a constant course of preaching. In point of emolument, the undertaking has very small temptation. The business of removal will be a heavy grievance; and there are some of our good neighbors whom it will be a matter of sincere regret to leave."

"Next week, it seems," he writes to Mr. Hughes, Sept. 23, 1817, "you are, in conjunction with Hall, &c., to appear in the best style at Oxford.\* I should very greatly like to hear the prime of our Baptist oratory, but it is not to be. In an humbler way I did my own share, by a long sermon here last Sunday evening, which left me so hoarse, as to be scarcely able to talk after it was over.

"By the end of next month, I expect, if all is well, to become a resident again at Downend. This has been determined by a balance of various considerations. As to the mere measure of

\* At a general meeting of the Baptist Missionary Society.



public exercise, it will make but a trifling difference, as I have been preaching nearly every Sunday for the last seven years, and generally twice in the day."

---

## LETTERS.

### LXIX. TO MRS. JOHN SHEPPARD.

*Bourton, August 3, 1808.*

DEAR MADAM.—. . . This should be about the time that you have often made your Dorsetshire journey; and possibly you are even now enjoying the society, excursions, and rural luxuries of your native downs, and even extending your rides to the sea-shore. Should this be the case, I trust you will bring back to the cottage confirmed health, and such an addition to your spirits as susceptible minds acquire from renewed intercourse with esteemed relatives, and an interval of variegated scene and action. Probably, however, no scene will more cordially please you than the very pretty meadows, and gentle hills round the cottage, with which, besides their acknowledged beauty, you have so long a train of interesting associations. It is, indeed, a very pleasing situation, and I shall not be in danger of losing the recollection, that it is a very pleasing house; I need not say in what light I regard the family with whom I was for several weeks a resident of it. I hope I may yet many times have the pleasure of seeing you in the same place,—excepting indeed the youngest of you; for as to her, I am afraid there can be no chance of her staying there long. There is no doubt in the world, that engineers of a certain description are often reconnoitring the house, with a view to the best mode of laying siege to it, in order to take her out; nor have I the smallest confidence that she may not voluntarily go over to the enemy. As I am not entirely unacquainted with the methods adopted by this sort of banditti, I do think, my dear madam, that in case of my being in your neighborhood a little while hence, it would not be amiss for you and me to hold, between ourselves, a council of war on the subject, in which I humbly think I might be able to make some suggestions, tending to guard against the danger both from external attack or stratagem, and from treachery within.

I hope my good friend, Mr. Walter S., retains that spring and animation of character for which everybody admires him, and that, as one requisite to his vivacity, his health is tolerably good. He has no doubt by this time made some of those pleasant excursions, that conduce so much to preserve it. One shall find no man, who has more of the happy art of varying his occupations, and enjoying the full pleasure of each of them in its turn. He seems equally at home in the employment, whether

he enters the social circle, or combats a modern quarto volume, or directs the arrangement of buildings or gardens. I hope he will long be able to enjoy such a vicissitude with animation; and that his benevolence will not let it be any increase of his satisfaction to know that a great many younger people envy him. . . . —I am, dear Madam,

Yours, with sincerest respect,

J. FOSTER.

LXX. TO D. PARKEN, ESQ.

*Bourton, 1808.*

. . . . I was much surprised at your making a difficulty and a delicacy as to the character of the review about Fox's book. I was never aware there was the smallest question whether the tenor of the Eclectic Review should be most decidedly favorable to the general principles of liberty. The case is bad with us with a vengeance if we are to be vastly careful, and genteel, and timorous in telling what we are to think of the Charles's, James, Laud, and all the high church of those times, . . . if we must not applaud *in toto* and without any limitation whatever, the very noble spirit of freedom which beyond my expectations exults through this admirable fragment of a history. We have read it twice, and some parts of it a third time; but I have entirely forgotten all it contains except the death of Argyle and a few more such interesting episodes. Did you notice this passage—the death of Argyle? Excepting some Christian martyrs, a nobler exit and character cannot be found in all the history of time. To have one such man rise among us, I would gladly see all the emperors, kings, bishops, and reviewers *except two*, carried to the top of Mount Hecla, and——

. . . . I have read the admirable article in the Edinburgh Review, on the paper of Cevallos. It is indeed superlative; but it does not want for absurdities, as for instance in representing, that though Bonaparte will probably subdue the Spaniards, yet, their having revolted will, even after they are subdued, tend to excite other revolts in Germany, &c., &c., as if the concluding part of the spectacle, their prostration and punishment, must not, in all reason, be the most impressive part of the lesson, confirming, beyond any former campaign, the popular persuasion of his being invincible, and therefore of its being mere madness to provoke his vengeance. But a greater absurdity is the pretending that the whole British nation are consciously and intentionally abetting revolutionary principles, when any child may know that the business of *principles* is not thought of by one in ten; that the great motive is mere hatred and fear of Bonaparte, and that our aristocracy and government hate, and will not fail to endeavor and stipulate to prevent and repress anything revolutionary in the Spanish transactions. It is utterly absurd to assume beforehand that the monarchy of Ferdinand, or Noodle, or Sooterkin, or whoever is to reign, will be of a very limited, restricted kind, and that there will be a

grand reforming of all abuses. Who is to secure all these fine things? Are not the nobility now at the head of the insurrection? Are they not absolute in their power? Will they not still be thus at the head of affairs, in the event of the success of the insurrection? And in what way are the *people*, such as survive, to order and compel them to all these notable self-denying ordinances? Indeed, who is foolish enough to dream, that a most ignorant populace, even if they *had* such power, know anything about politics? Perhaps not one in ten of them knows that there is such a thing as representation in the world.

The absurdity is not less of talking what grand reforms we shall have *here*, in consequence of it all, whether it fail or succeed. One does want to ask these talkers in what way these reforms are to be effected. Pray, how are the people—the general people—to be excited to demand anything about reforms? Abominable abuses enough have been displayed by Cobbett, by the commissions of inquiry, &c., &c., but what do the collective people think or care about it? And if the stupid, corrupted herd did think and care, and demand, what *hold* have they on the government? The government will very properly laugh at their demanding, their palavering, their petitioning, and their grumbling. . . . What a strange inconsistency pervades the Edinburgh Review. But lately they were defending against Cobbett every, absolutely every, corruption, even formally and specifically that of *buying seats in parliament*.

It is very striking to observe how totally all reference to Providence is disowned by our political writers, and how trivial in their view would be any religious object which that Power may possibly have in view in such a case. As to the success of Bonaparte, I suppose there must, in fact, have been no great difference of opinion, since we have seen how easily Austria was quieted, perhaps by the Erfurth journey. With respect to the co-operation of our army, it seems never to strike anybody what horror the Spaniards must, at bottom, have for a vast assemblage of heretics, men whom they deem children of the devil, going straight to him, and essentially endangering any cause in which they are employed. This feeling, not to mention insults which will inevitably be interchanged on the score of religion, will strangely damp the ardor of co-operation.

---

LXXI. TO D. PARKEN ESQ.

*Bourton, Feb. 23, 1809.*

HONORED SIR,—As far as the fact simply of your condescension is concerned, in giving me the opportunity of “protesting,” I am, as in duty bound, humbly grateful. . . . As to connecting Walker with G. Wakefield, in the way you propose, besides the silly vanity, to say the least of it, of eagerly stepping forward to proclaim that *we* will lend no sanction, no, not *we*, to reformers and their schemes; just as if the system of corruption held its existence suspended on the favor and authority

of the Eclectic Review, and just as if there were nobody else in all the church and state to denounce Walker and Wakefield,—besides any consideration of this kind, the coupling them together in the manner you are for, would probably be incorrect in point of fact. I never read much of Wakefield, nor have any mighty impression of his talents and wisdom, but the precise thing I recollect most distinctly in his political references, is a short piece of argumentative ridicule (in a pamphlet in 1792 or 1793) of the notion of our *balanced* constitution, tending to show, indeed asserting, that a *real* and independent representation of the people would, by its very nature, soon put an end to monarchy, or at least reduce it to a thing of perfect insignificance. For what I can know, Walker might be a republican too; but in this book nothing of the kind appears. Since reading your letter, I have again read those two or three speeches at public meetings about the petitions, as it is in these that the political portion of the memoir consists, and there is no insinuation in the slightest degree against monarchy. He distinctly specifies the three parts of the *constitution*, and fully avows his approbation of a constitution so formed . . . in a short, simple, unaffected way, briefly deducing the history of its formation. But then he goes on to represent that this constitution, so judicious, and so extolled, is a mere phantom, a mere name, unless it *do*, *bonâ fide*, consist of those three separate estates which have always been considered as composing it, both by commentators at home and commentators abroad. And he makes a series of singularly lucid, simplified, and forcible observations, to show that if the representatives of the people be substantially under the control, both as to their election and their legislative proceedings, of the crown and the aristocracy, there cannot be the three separate constituent powers required and meant by the universally received theory of the constitution, both among the vulgar and the learned. He dwells but briefly, and with no language of virulence, on the fact that the representation is at present utterly corrupt in its election (as to a preponderating proportion) and in its consequent action, no doubt presuming that this was quite apparent, and indeed it had been stated by other speakers in the meetings; but warmly urges a popular endeavor by petition to obtain the restoration of that kind of election which the constitution by its whole nature and design, and by its specific provisions, had always intended; cautioning the people at the same time against everything violent and rash. The business is done, as nearly as can be imagined, in the manner in which Locke would have done it. In the meeting and speech relating to "Economical Reform," he mentions a few items of corrupt and extravagant expenditure. In the large tract, "The Dissenter's Plea," he argues the matter in hand with great acuteness and exemplary liberality; indeed in one or two places conceding full as much as a dissenter could consistently do, stoutly maintaining, however, that religion is not a thing within the magistrate's jurisdiction. I should have spoken more strongly of this essay, but in consideration of our "*neutrality*." This, however, is only a collateral

argument, and not that on which he chiefly dwells in pleading for a repeal of the acts petitioned against. In short, in this book (and everywhere else, as far as I know) there is nothing to identify him with the revolutionary school; he was of the school of Locke and those other names that, till of late years, have been generally held up as the standard and worthiest advocate of civil and religious liberty.

. . . . You say, "No good is to be got by forwarding the views, and adopting the spirit of the Cobbetts and the Burdetts." What are Cobbett and Burdett to us, or to the question, except so far as they serve in the capacity of witnesses or advocates? There is a grand question before the nation, not merely at this or the other particular juncture, but constantly and permanently; and a very simple question, though it consist of several parts; as first, whether civil and religious liberty, with a firm and guarded security for it, be really a good thing for a people or not; or whether all that has been said in its praise by reputed wise and good men has been foolish babbling, or deliberate deception; and all that has been suffered in its defence or recovery a mere sacrifice to a worthless idol; and whether after all the millions of volumes' worth that has been written or speechified, and prayed against despotism, political and sacerdotal, this same despotism is, notwithstanding, the very thing most conducive to social happiness and improvement. Second, whether our *constitution* do or do not really mean that there shall be a *real* representation of the people. Third, whether what is called the representative body be not now, and of late years, desperately and systematically corrupt; and necessarily so, in consequence of its mode of election, and its length of duration; and whether it does not palpably betray the very interests of which it is professedly the guardian, and with impunity laugh in the face of any complainant or remonstrant that tells it it does so. Fourthly, whether it be not palpably proved, on an immense mass of evidence, some of the clearest and least contradictable of which happens to be brought forward by "the Cobbetts and the Burdetts," that throughout every part of the practical executive system, down to the smallest ramifications, the most enormous peculation, and in plain speech, what would be called villany in any other department than that of the state (that is, the conduct of the great public interests), does prevail, and continually increase. Now, these and similar matters, I suppose, form the prominent part of what we mean by politics. I suppose, too, that no honest man, that has at all attended to the subject, can make a doubt how the truth stands on each of these points. And then I may surely ask, in the name of sense and decency, whether an honest and religious reviewer can have a question which side he should take, when the subject is placed in his way by the very topics of the books which he is to criticise. Because Burdett and Cobbett, and some other men, whose characters he does not approve, are among the means of exposing a world of abominable proceedings, attributable, in a good measure, to the state of the representation, do *therefore* these base proceedings, and this

parliament, the protector or partaker of the baseness, instantly acquire a claim to the kind partiality and delicate forbearance of this honest and religious reviewer? It does not belong to his vocation to dwell long on the subject; and *I*, whose sentences and paragraphs of the kind are the present cause of complaint, and the cause of this most stupid sheetful of common-place and truism, *do* never dwell long, and *have* never dwelt long, on the subject. If passages of the length I have made them, and intelligibly pointed against the system of corruption, cannot rightly have a place in the Eclectic Review, that Review ought avowedly and explicitly to confine itself to a limited and defined department of literature, and not let itself be understood, as it now is, to take a general cognizance of speculation and morals. . . . It would no doubt be curious enough, just at this time, to forswear all reference to a subject which, taken on the wide scale, is convulsing the whole civilized world,—which is affecting the very essence of the public morals,—is practically drawing towards a very awful crisis, and which is interfering in numberless ways with our civil and religious condition, our exertions, our pecuniary means, and all our temporal prospects: but one thing would be gained to the Review by the exclusion;—there would be no insinuated apologies for wickedness in high places; there would be no praises of such things as Custance; nor fawning, and at the same time despised attempts to gratify bigots and plunderers by officious and uncalled for disclaimers of such men as Walker and Wakefield, either of whom, at least the former of whom, would have lost his head sooner than have participated in the wages of unrighteousness. . . .

. . . . If by “attempts to advance particular interests” you really mean the general interest of truth and justice against all manner of corruptions, and against that kind of corruption in particular, which any book in hand forces on our view—it is a noble plan for a free and Christian Review to renounce any such design, and wonderfully useful it is likely to be in consequence. Yes, he must be a most worthy and formidable *censor morum*, who dare not for his neck say a word against corrupt statesmen and prelatical bigots, or give the smallest hint of being aware that the House of Commons is anything else than a convocation of saints, so holy that we had need plant a guard on them to prevent angels stealing them into heaven, the moment they come out of doors at St. Stephen’s.

Yours with profound respect,

J. F.

---

LXXII. TO THE REV. JOSEPH HUGHES.

*Bourton, March 16, 1809.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I am highly delighted by the probability, almost probability, of soon seeing you here. . . . Though I cannot wish that your complaint may *not* be better, I do certainly and very strongly wish, that while it is a little mending, you may *think* it is not better; or at least

that you may have prudence enough to conclude to forbear all public effort for some time. A permanent injury to the voice, to say no worse, may be the consequence of forcing it during the continuance of the organic disability. Come and stay a few weeks; the very change of air may be useful; and both I and wife should be exceedingly glad to retain you till it be fully safe for you to attack the obdurate Battersea consciences again. Leave the pagan caitiffs a while to their reflections, and to a change of ministry, while you take a change of air.

. . . . Your letter contains some very just reproof, and some very foolish explanation of my unconscionable length of silence. I feel, beyond all comparison, more mortification and irksome sense of debility about intellectual faculty and performance, than I do self-complacency. And I must still and ever protest, that my neglect of writing is not to be attributed to decline of friendship.\* It is owing to an inveterate, and I

\* "You address so many pages to the public, that your former correspondents ought to excuse you, and more than excuse you, if they should seem to be neglected, and even abandoned, in consequence of your far-extended lucubrations.

"I have said too much; a certain portion of your former correspondents claim, at least, an occasional notice—and it would not misbecome you, if you granted what they claim a little oftener. He is the fittest man to teach and discipline the community, who himself observes all the proprieties of life. But that Maria!—Maria repels the charge, and asks, 'whether correspondents did not complain before the alleged monopoly took place.' I will settle the business, then, in another way. J. F. has not the privilege of numbering among his would-be correspondents, men of adequate intellectual strength; the most Herculean among them can barely appreciate and relish his paragraphs; they can make him no return in kind. Hence his interest in them becomes feeble; if he seizes his pen, with a view to their individual gratification, his mind sinks towards their level by an oppressive sympathy; or if he keeps up to his own standard, he writes what ought to be printed, without acquiring either the fame or the emolument which he might have acquired by printing. Here it is obvious, benevolent, as well as selfish motives may influence, since the time occupied in writing a superior letter, might enable J. F. to instruct an author and his readers, through the medium of a Review, whose sale his pen appears to have promoted. Yet this said J. F. might perhaps be suitably reminded, that a letter might please and improve which should involve no labor, and display no genius. I will not prose on this plain subject. *Verbum sat.*

"It is sometimes remarked, that your critiques have too little reference to the article before you; that they are deficient in analysis and citation; and that thus, while they exhibit the reviewer, they obscure the author. This censure applies eminently to your critique on the *Chronicle of the Cid*. The work is disposed of rather uncivilly, and everything gives way to your reflections on Hispano-Anglican politics. For my own part, I would not exact much more than you assign to the work, except on the score of precedent; especially as your reflections are so accurate, and so much to the point. Perhaps, indeed, the circumstance of our having stipulated nothing in favor of Protestantism, detached from the mass of your reflections, may be plausibly vindicated against your implied animadversion; but taking the article as a whole, it so well asserts *general principles*, and so completely confounds the pseudo-patriotic declamations on behalf of the Quixotic effort to aid a people, who to this hour have no just conceptions of liberty, that I read it with animated pleasure. What must

now believe unchangeable, antipathy to all writing; an antipathy which I may truly say, and am sorry for its being true, accompanies me through every paragraph or sentence that I ever write. It is with a feeling approaching to hatred, that I do at any time, on any occasion or subject, take up the pen. Even the small wares in the way of criticism, therefore, that I have compelled myself to manufacture, have cost me more self-denial than Henry's or Gill's Expositions, or the whole immense works of Calmet, ever cost their respective authors. This aversion would diminish if I acquired any greater facility; but I do not, except in point of being correct, nor I suppose now ever shall.

Do you come next week, and that will be better than quires of writing; I mean *my* writing, for I have lost none of the animated pleasure with which I receive a letter from you.

Coles has just lost his infant. . . . It is too true that he is, as you say, a better man than I am; I hope to get before him, notwithstanding. . . . Parken is still at you, he says, about the Review, whenever he sees you. Why do you not buckle to? I repeat once more, that it will be useful both to the Review and to yourself. And it is the more necessary to have a complete crew of dissenters, as I am persuaded the churchmen auxiliaries, excepting perhaps J—— of H——, will by degrees, and rather soon, declare off. We are taking a tone of freedom which they will not be able to endure, and in which they will, besides, feel it impolitic to have been known, in any manner, to coalesce with. They have, it seems, been warned not to do it, by the author of *Zeal without Innovation*. Now, as a real, positive, absolute, peremptory secret—

we think of Sheridan and other opposition men, who bawled so loud for these roused but not illuminated Dons, who, after all, have treated their English protectors with so much indifference and so much contempt?

"Who is to review '*Zeal without Innovation*'? It is calculated to produce a rich harvest of theological wormwood. With some serious deductions, I admire 'Cœlebs;' hope it will be reviewed by you. Rowland Hill's *Lovegood* should be held up for comparison with that *orderly* parson Barlow. What is the starched priest by the side of the cordial pastor? Had that Rowland left out half his controversies, and purified his dialect, his work, in point of utility, would have borne away the palm. In a *large* circle it will, with all its imperfections.

" . . . I have not seen the Quarterly, which is to rival the Edinburgh. In religion, I suppose, it will have the praise of not being so bad; but in politics, I anticipate the reverse of all I delight to read in the Edinburgh. . . .

"I was impressed while reading the last number of the Eclectic, and indeed I am often impressed with the importance of cultivating and drawing forth the mental talents of the sanctuary. The barrister and a hundred more are reviling the *class* without mercy; opposed to them are the rapid, or the violent, or the illiterate: when shall the right race come?

"Again I exhort you to prepare for your fourth edition, and to revise your *Essay on Time*. Moreover, I recommend you to study the signs of the times, . . . so as to start a suitable subject, in the discussion of which you shall bear down, with Napoleonic energy, on the host summoned by folly and by sin."—*The Rev. Joseph Hughes to Mr. Foster; Battersea, March, 1809.*



and which, for the present at least, you must keep so—Parken has informed me, that *Achilles* himself is poisoning his tremendous lance against this ill-fated, officious, bravo champion of the church. We shall see whether its point of steel has become less deadly from rusting so long at Leicester. . . . I hope the article will come soon, will be long, and in the best manner. I do not expect to see *Cælebs*, in any connection with the review. The article about the Cid, though open, I am fully aware, to various objections—some of which I could have obviated, if I had not been severely driven for time—is perhaps the one by which I should expect to produce more good effect than any other.

---

LXXIII. TO D. PARKEN, ESQ.

*Bourton, June 2, 1809.*

. . . . Rose's is really an entertaining book. I was very mad when I saw the price marked at £1 5s., but, on coming to read a piece of it, I found that George had worked very hard for his money. He does indeed transcribe and translate most plentifully, and charges you for acres of white paper; but, at the same time, he gives you such a sample of industrious grubbing among old records, manuscripts, and moss-covered statutes, as you shall probably never live to see again. He has certainly refuted Fox, as to some slight historical particulars, especially as to his assertion and reasonings that the introduction of popery into England was not a leading, or the leading, object of James's policy. As far as I have yet looked, there is nothing that bears with any particular force on Fox's political principles, excepting his partiality to the Whigs, whom George proves to have been as confounded villains about, as their opponents. The whole job is done with perspicuity and prodigious good humor, and the whole ~~job~~ tends to prove the folly of any man's pretending to write history, ~~as it~~ shows what enormous toil of research is necessary to ascertain conclusively a diminutive portion of the facts of a diminutive portion of the annals, of a diminutive portion of the two-legged insects that swarm on this earth, if indeed even this sample is conclusive, and if some still more effectual grubber should not grub up even a confutation of George himself.\*

. . . . Now that I recollect about Hall's composition—that excellence which you praised, and which he has in a very high degree, of making brief, strong sentences, completing the sense in each—is sometimes carried to a fault. He makes, in some places, a number of laconic propositions in succession, which are quite independent of one another, but which ought to have been contrived into a texture. Or, to go from the business of weaving to the more dignified one—fighting—he attacks with

\* Such a "*grubber*" was Serjeant HERRWOOD. Vide Contributions, &c., Vol. I., p. 160 (Eclectic Review, July, 1809), and p. 176 (Eclectic Review, Dec. 1811).

a number of single, separate, bold savages, whom he should have disciplined and combined into a phalanx. In this quality of writing we are all beaten hollow by the old workmen, such as Hooker and Jeremy Taylor; the latter is just now more in my memory. You shall find him preserve a strict connection through a whole folio page; a sentence shall be a complete thought, but it shall, at the same time, be an integral and inseparable portion of—not an accumulation, but a combination, of—thoughts, which are assisting one another by a linked and consentaneous action to prove or illustrate some one truth. The figure is much less than sufficiently strict, if I say, that there is one long, identical rope, and that every thought, however richly dressed, is placed close behind its fellow, and giving a stout pull. From the little I have yet read, I am strongly inclined to think this said Jeremy is the most *completely* eloquent writer in our language. There is a most manly and graceful ease and freedom in his composition, while a strong intellect is working logically through every paragraph, while all manner of beautiful images continually fall in as by felicitous accident. . . .

---

## LXXIV. TO THE REV. JOSEPH HUGHES.

*Bourton, July 4, 1809.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,—. . . We were much disappointed at not seeing you at the association time. We had the first tangible gooseberries, &c. &c., prepared to regale you, and were representing in our imaginations how we should be ourselves mentally and morally regaled. But we did not wonder at not having seen you, when we afterwards learnt the limits of your time, what your plan was, and how you were accompanied.

This chance being gone by, is there none of your passing this way to Bristol? . . . But for something like a wish to visit London within the space of half a year or so, I should be for trying to make an inducement of my own wish to accompany you to Bristol. . . . If I should conclude for Bristol myself, I shall venture to urge the plan. But really I have passed so idle a spring and summer that I think I must not venture so far from my books. Among those books I am muddling on in a poor way. Many of them I never look into; some of them, when I do look into, I cannot understand (pe rex. Cudworth, Locke, Hume, &c.); the bits and sections I read without order, in others, I utterly forget; and in short, but for the name and notion of the thing, I might nearly as well have no books at all, excepting indeed those with pictures in, which I find nearer my taste and capacity. Partly by opportunity I have lately been led into a fancy for possessing myself of the most noted divines of the established church, and have bought the principal works of Hooker, Cudworth, Taylor (Jeremy), and Barrow, and I have read enough of each to be able to talk about them, and to praise them in the customary lingo of criticism, without talking altogether without book. I want a few more

of them, especially Chillingworth and Leslie. I apprehend our dissenters are not sufficiently acquainted with these antique gentlemen. Perhaps we are mortified at their striking superiority over all the non-cons. of that or the subsequent age. I have read more of Taylor than of the others that I have enumerated, and certainly should soon have discovered him to be passing eloquent and able in every respect, if I had never once heard of his name ;—very far beyond even such men as Bates and Howe. Reading such authors, and some others that I have looked into of late, tends to make one shrink from the thoughts of writing. To say nothing of the humiliating consciousness as to the degree of talent, one is made to feel that, in point of *knowledge*, one has a world to learn, before one can pretend to write in any commanding manner. I am trying, in the teeth of indolence, debility, and a wretched memory, to read and study hard, and will hope to become competent to something or other in time, that may considerably serve the cause of religion.

I am vexed to hear you again declare off from being a reviewer, after I have told you so many times of its palpable advantages, in a literary respect. I cannot forbear to renew my exhortations on the subject. It helps to toss abroad your manner of thinking and composing, and therefore to help your riddance from any bad habit that is in danger of becoming fixed and unalterable. I am bound in duty, therefore, once more to give and inculcate neglected good advice. Your last Tract Society report is freer than anything you have written before, from your literary besetting sin ; indeed, it appeared to me about wholly free. I am always gratified to think of your various and active utility ; but, at the same time, you ought to set it down in your purposes, and the train of your studies, to do something that shall continue to preach and persuade after you shall have become finally silent. And this, not for that bubble fame, but to protract, as far as possible, a beneficial agency.

---

LXXV. TO D. PARKEN, ESQ.

DEAR SIR,—It would be some consolation to poor authors, if they could know how reviewers plague one another. And truly it may be made a question how far that calling can be a good one which involves so much irregularity, idleness, threatening, reproach, disregard of promises, and consequent want of confidence and co-operation, among its agents. Only, however, set aside the morality of the employment, and all this may be very good for giving it *effect*, for depravity is allowed to be one of the best whetstones of ability. What would become, I wonder, of our preparing of vitriol for authors and their books, if we were always talking to one another in the style of Moravians at a love-feast, and handing round candies and cowslip wine ? This would be a poor mental diet for the noble profession of tomahawks. The more we can contrive to snarl and quarrel among ourselves, the more will our

hands be in, for the benefit of authors, the edification of our readers, and the sale of our Review.

. . . . I hope you have not engaged Coleridge's Poems soon to be published, to any of your gang. I shall be eager to see them, and should review them *con amore*. He is the poet that will overtop all his contemporaries.

. . . . Jeremy Taylor will never more be read but by the curious few. He is too learned, too antiquated, and has too much of logical technicality, to be ever again a popular author. He is further removed from popular language, a good deal, than even Barrow, and incomparably further than Tillotson. So far as he shall be read, the only harm the critic has to prevent is of that kind which Hall describes so well in characterizing Tillotson's and Barrow's theology,\* and the possibility of being tempted, under the notion of being ingenious and brilliant, to imitate, and produce a gross, conceited affectation in imitating, his rich novelties of phrase, his arbitrary combination of words—the result, in him, of an infinite variety of particularities of thought—such analogies, antitheses, and illusions, as no mind could have been capable of, that was not full of all manner of learning, and teeming with all manner of fancy. . . . .

---

LXXVI. TO D. PARKEN, ESQ.

*Bourton, October 25, 1809.*

. . . . The speaking in the personation on the stage intends, at least, and assumes to be something more than pure recitation; it will not suffer itself to be considered as merely free and memoriter reading; and its being so considered would destroy the greatest part of the fascination. It aims to impose itself on the fancy, as at the least some middle thing between mere recitation and an utterance of the living sentiments of real characters in a real situation. Indeed, that which it necessarily aims at, and by means of which it must captivate, has always appeared to us to involve so gross and monstrous an absurdity, that we are persuaded, if there shall ever come an age of sound sense, the *acted* drama will be condemned for being essentially irrational, setting aside all moral and religious considerations. For ourselves, we will own, that the suggestions and questions naturally arising in our minds, "What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba?" Who and what are you, that are vociferating those words of passion? What business have you to be in any passion on those boards, and to be taking all those postures and gesticulations about it, when you know the whole is a fiction, at which you are going to laugh at supper? And if you are in no passion at all, any more than you will then be, over your wine and ratafia, what a ridiculous thing it is to be thus whining, writhing and tossing, to keep up such a miserable

\* HALL's Works, vol. iv., p. 134 (*Review of Gisborne's Sermons*).

sham? We will own that such suggestions have always been to us a plentiful damper to any portion of that sympathy and rapture we have so often heard of.\*

---

LXXVII. TO WALTER SHEPPARD, ESQ.

*Bourton, December 25, 1809.*

DEAR SIR,—A late letter from Miss A. gives me information respecting the state of your health, which, in common with every one of your friends, I am very sorry to hear. I have been so accustomed, in my own mind, and in speaking of you among our friends, to congratulate you on possessing an activity and an animated enjoyment of life, very unusual at your age, that I have very seldom anticipated for you a time when these would necessarily fail.

I have promised myself, almost, as a matter of course, that whenever I should see you again, I should find you just as before. But at last the time is come for the Disposer of life and health to intimate to you, and your surrounding friends, that he has a sovereign right to resume what he has so long bestowed.

Nevertheless, Miss A. B.'s account leads me to hope that your life may be spared to your friends yet a while longer; and I sincerely join with them all in wishing it might be even for a number of years—though I do not know whether, as to yourself, this should be the wish of true friendship, since every month and year through which we all wish your life may be protracted, would impose an exercise of your patience and resignation, and painfully remind you of that past vigor which you will not expect to possess any more on earth. Happily, the determination of this concern lies with the wisest and best of all your friends, and happily, too, you can rejoice that it does so. It is gratifying to me, though not at all surprising, to be informed that your mind is so tranquil and resigned. You can look back with thankfulness on a long life, during which you have been favored with prosperity, with affectionate friends, and with a most uncommon share of health and cheerfulness, and during which you have not forgotten to whom you owed all these blessings, and (which is a subject for still much greater thankfulness) you now look forward to an infinitely longer and better life, to be conferred by the same divine Benefactor. To be able thus to look back, and thus to look forward, with profound emotions of gratitude to that Benefactor at every step of the contemplation, will inspire a joy which

\* "From J. Foster, Oct. 25, 1809, intended as part of a critique on Plumtre; preserved as indicating a curious trait in his character—the absolute control possessed by his judgment over his fancy, while that fancy, at the same time, is above all others electrically vivid and energetic. The fancy of other men is often the tyrant of their passions—his, the servant of his understanding."—*Note by Mr. Parken*; vide *Contributions, &c.*, to the *Eclectic Review*, vol. i., p. 345, on Plumtre's Defence of the Stage

I trust will sustain you during your hours of greatest languor and weakness, and during all the remainder of your journey of life, whether longer or shorter. What a delightful resource is piety at such a season, when it is an *old* resource, instead of being then sought for the first time. It is not a trifling consolation, neither, that all your friends near at hand will cordially and anxiously contribute to alleviate the pressure of affliction, and that the best of them will petition our supreme Friend to make it light. I will hope to hear that you are considerably reviving, and likely to remain among them a while longer, and afford them pleasure without feeling life a burden yourself. I will hope to have myself the pleasure of seeing you yet again, and feeling some of that cheerfulness in your company, which I have scarcely ever been in it without enjoying. Whatever may be the divine dispensation concerning your health and life, it will assuredly be a merciful one. You yourself believe that it will, and this faith will be precious in every oppressive hour.

I most cordially wish you the recovered strength necessary for making your life, if protracted, more pleasing than painful, or the gracious support requisite for sustaining with Christian fortitude a prolonged illness which may terminate in a removal to a better world. . . .

---

LXXVIII. TO THE REV. JOHN FAWCETT.

*Bourton, January 7, 1810.*

MY DEAR SIR,—Your letter did not, and could not, fail to awaken some of the most pleasing sentiments that I can ever feel, recollections of ancient friendship, and assurances that this friendship includes no principle of decay. I immediately recognized your hand, and was glad to see it; I had often wished, during the past half year, to hear from you again; but I knew you are at all times busy in the most useful engagements. I wish myself also to be usefully busy; but I would entreat you not to repeat such expressions as that in your letter of being “unwilling to intrude too much on my time;” such expressions have quite a mortifying and irksome effect, as coming from a most respected old friend, whose own time is employed to a much more valuable purpose, and, I am afraid, with much more unremitted industry.

I find myself naturally adopting such words as “old” and “ancient,” in referring to the earlier periods of our friendship. Does not that period appear to *you* a very long time since? and have you not half a feeling, sometimes, as if you were growing old? I have, at times, very much of this kind of consciousness. It is not the being aware of any physical or mental decline, but a remoteness in my retrospects—the disappearance by death of so many of my elders, and even co-evals—the dispersion and changed condition of my early companions—the alteration of a great part of the economy of my feelings—the five feet ten inches altitude of persons whom I recollect as infants when I first

reached that altitude—and the very sound and appearance of the word *forty* (to the number meant in which word I shall soon have a very particular relation)—these, and I suppose many more things, concur to make me feel how far I have gone already past the meridian hour of the short day of life. Nor do I in the least deplore this fact, in any other way than regretting the miserably deficient improvement of a life of which the best part is now gone.

This grand consideration of making the noblest use of life will be very animating and consoling to you, amidst a measure of labor which would otherwise be really oppressive to you. You will have the gratification of feeling that each week that passes away is filled with your very best efforts, in one of the most important departments of human industry. I earnestly wish your health may be habitually firm enough for your office, and that the health of your most intimate associate may be firm enough to bear her part of the economy. I am sorry to hear your unfavorable account of it, but wish to hope that by this time you have some more decisive indications of its being soon to be re-established. She must sustain a most ample share, indeed, of your domestic and even professional cares; and if it were only for your sake, I wish that such an important “helpmeet” may recover, and long retain her vigor and spirits; but also for her own sake, and for that of her children. I most sincerely wish she may have all the strength and animation which she possessed at those times, which I often recollect, when I used to frequent her house and her company, and derive vivacity from seeing so much of it displayed by her. Your children, I trust, will somewhat more than repay your incessant cares for them, by their affection, docility, and hopeful dispositions and faculties. The larger number of them, I believe, are boys, and I continue to wish that the larger number of *them* may some time turn out *preachers*, since there is no cause on earth so important as religion, since there is no chance of this cause being extensively served but by dissenters, and since it is exceedingly desirable that the dissenting teachers should spring from among the youth of a liberal and literary education.

I am glad your respected father does not experience so much of the infirmities of age as to prevent him from feeling great interest and pleasure in prosecuting his commentary. It appears to me an employment most happily chosen to beguile those infirmities, as well as to crown the conclusion of life with a peculiar utility. No doubt he feels it, next to the exercises of devotion, his most pleasing and even exhilarating resource, amidst those visitations of pain and languor from which the age of seventy can seldom be entirely exempt. I cannot wonder that your mother, as she is, I believe, some years older than your father, should show the evident signs of decline within a single year; but I hope, especially for his sake, that she is yet appointed to continue an inhabitant of the earth a good while longer. My imagination has often sought out the site of their house, and represented the calm and devout habits of its possessors. . . .

Mr. Greaves, with the exception of the temporary infelicity arising from the loss you advert to, is, perhaps, among our early friends, the individual on whose lot and progress Providence has borne fully as auspicious an aspect as on any other. *We three* have all of us the strongest reason to be thankful to that most gracious Providence. And, considering our age, and now established principles, views, and habits, it is no slight satisfaction to hope that we are now passed safe beyond the most unsteady, hazardous, and tempting periods, feelings, and scenes of life;—not that we can ever be safe but by divine preservation; but still it is no trifling advantage that some of the most pernicious influences of a bad world have necessarily, as to us, lost very much of their power.

I cannot but be gratified at hearing so favorable an account of my father and mother. I should like to see them, and all of you again; but a consideration of the melancholy of parting, the enormous expense of travelling so far, with many other considerations, prevent me from forming any plan or positive intention on the subject. I deeply regret the condition of the manufacturers and the poor in your neighborhood; and the more as there seems no prospect, in the political state of the world, of any material change in favor of commerce. . . .

The business of reviewing has been the chief use I have made of the pen for a good while past, and probably will for some time to come. I mean to addict myself a good deal to other composition for a while; and, in the meantime, I consider this reviewing as the best possible kind of discipline for my improvement in composition, while also I am acquiring a little of different kinds of knowledge by the reading which attends it.

. . . . The review of Crabbe's Poems in the January number is by Mr. Hall, but is only the second article he has ever contributed, and, I am afraid, may not soon be followed by any other: he has such a strange and unfortunate aversion to writing.

---

LXXIX. TO D. PARKEN, ESQ.

*Bourton.*

. . . There is a very good show of ability and knowledge in the Quarterly Review. The article about Spain is by some person better acquainted with the actual state of that country than any of the political critics. It involves, however, no refutation of the notions of Cobbett and us; on the contrary, it tends more fully than anything I have seen to prove the necessity of an absolute and total demolition of every part of the government, the prostration to the very dust of every institution throughout the country, in order to create any union and prolongation of the national energy. I own it goes a good way, at the same time, towards showing that this was impracticable, and therefore that the



whole design was preposterous, and the English but fools to encourage it. Southey's article may do good, by gaining the attention to the mission, of persons whose attention would never have been gained by the professedly religious publications, that is, as he will foolishly have it, the Methodistical.\*

. . . . I have not the means of learning, further than by internal evidence, what you do for the Eclectic Review. The article about Hannah More was very decently done ; part of the first page being unintelligible, as should always be the case, when the article is to be of some length, in order to give it, at the outset, a kind of oracular and mysterious dignity. . . . .

With great and melancholy interest I have been running through a good part of the New Annual Register for the years 1791-2-3-4, &c., and contemplating the enormous expense of talent, grand achievement, and life, under circumstances where one clearly sees the moral impossibility of doing any good. Between the depravity of the French populace and the effects inevitably produced by the coalition of the hostile powers, one sees *how* the greatest talents and virtues that ever came on this earth, would have failed to establish the French people in a state of liberty and happiness. . . . .

---

LXXX. TO D. PARKEN, ESQ.

*Bourton.*

. . . . As to the phrase "gnashing of teeth," you should be more discreet than to defend it ; it is quite enough to have inserted it, and it is more than enough, in condemning it, to say, that it is an attempt to turn into a witticism one of the expressions used in the Bible to describe the most dreadful of all things in the universe, the agonies inflicted by the divine vengeance in another world. As to *my* often adverting to the great wicked spirit, it does not become me to say that I do not *too* often and too lightly do this ; but there is, notwithstanding, a very material difference between alluding too lightly to him as the prompter of many fooleries as well as many crimes, and alluding with the same indefensible lightness to the express, inspired description of infernal suffering. . . . Have you any guess who wrote the admirable review of Sydney Smith in the Christian observer ? Has Hall undertaken anything more ? An excellent subject for him would be, when it comes to a volume, Coleridge's "Friend," excepting what is political in it. Do you read it ? He is a marvellously original and subtile thinker. Appearances are favorable thus far as to religion, and I hope he is one of the few geniuses that the aforesaid Satan does not inspire, and will not be allowed to seize. If Hall should not choose, I might have the ambition of trying my own hand on this "Friend," but Hall is the proper man.

\* Vide *Quarterly Review*, Feb., 1809, Art. xvii., "Periodical Accounts relative to the Baptist Missionary Society," &c.

. . . . The "four supporters" are no doubt oracular men, one and all, but I can tell these supporters that it is with the dissenters that the work will ultimately stand or fall, and with the dissenters it has but barely even now recovered its character for spirit and freedom, after its merge in that slough of low sycophancy to church and state, through which these supporters had the wisdom to make it go, in the commencement. Talk of *me* "hanging them," why they were within the smallest trifle of hanging *themselves*, and would have done it, if I and Co. had not slackened the noose, by means of a quantity of that very independence which these very same rescued and living men bawl out will be hanging of them. As it is totally out of the question to think of really pleasing both of the two great parties, the policy is to lean towards the dissenters—they are the rising party, and they are the final resource and hope of anything which is to pretend to freedom of thinking; and the "supporters" know, or may know, that, do what they please, it will be absolutely impossible to satisfy permanently the church people with anything that would deserve the approbation of independent men. But it is not simply the church and state people, as it should seem, but the *high* church and state that these supporters are so intimidated at: the class of persons, I suppose, that cannot endure to have it said that there has ever been corruption among statesmen, or intolerance and persecution among bishops; i. e. who must not allow a reference to the most notorious facts of our history, even when the transactions and characters of that history are the subjects formally in hand. But why did not this right worthy class of readers patronize the Review at first, when it was so anxiously cooked to their taste?

---

LXXXI. TO THE REV. JOSEPH HUGHES.

*Bourton, June 28, 1810.*

. . . . A residence in a place like this is subject to such a perfect sameness of occurrences, actions, and feelings, that one really has a consciousness, at any time, all round the year, of having nothing at all to write about to a friend at a distance. You can form no notion of it, in the remotest degree, in your active sphere, and various expeditions, pursuits, and societies. The truth is, that my faculties suffer very materially, in point of vigor and dexterity, and even in point of mere knowledge, by this extreme recluseness of life. But this is no neighborhood to mend the matter. Society here, with the exception of one or two individuals, is all miserable trifling, and small talk. These observations involve or imply no complaint whatever of my immediate domestic society; that is soft, complacent, tender; and it is improving, too, so far as this very softness does not tend to preclude the harder subjects, and the severer exertions of thought from social converse. But in the midst of affectionate complacency, and the numerous topics of more facile

discussion, my wretchedly indolent mind is reluctant to set itself, in earnest, to dialogues (in which it would not be left without co-operation) on the questions that contribute most to harden and invigorate the intellectual man. We read socially a great deal ; among other books, almost all those that I review. As far as I read or study solitarily, I am just as desultory and unsystematic as I have always been—but shall not be to the end of the chapter. . . .

It is an interesting, though too rapid, sketch you give of your northern adventures. We must have the deficiency made up by oral recitals, a little while hence. I am glad you are not yet too old and sapless to be delighted with recollecting, on the spot, your morning of life, and its interests. I have myself but little of this capability now. Notwithstanding the acknowledged, and not to be forgotten, beauties of *Todmorden Vale*, I have no wish to revisit the scene of early life, but on account of those two old persons you saw, and half a dozen others, several of them of nearly the same antiquity. I am very glad those two have once seen you ; they always think of you as a benefactor to them, in having been so to me ; and as long as they live they will be gratified to have at last a defined image of you in their minds. I find my immediate relationships at prodigious extremes when I turn in thought from those two venerable persons, whose joint ages amount to at least seventy-nine years a-piece, to Jack here, that is scarcely six months old. He is a healthy, vigorous fellow, and occupies quite as much of people's time and attention as he deserves. As to "education," if he live to be its progressive subject, it may be much better than the ordinary quality of that article, and yet far enough from "perfect." If, however, it could be near perfection, I know too much of human nature to be very sanguine.

---

LXXXII. TO THE REV. JOSEPH HUGHES.

*Bourton, 1810.*

. . . . You say there are "materials lying within you (as well as around you) inefficient, and but little known. . . . Why are they inefficient ? I must take the liberty of saying, you are bound to *make* them efficient. Were they beyond the moon or so, there were no duty in the case ; but as lying within you, they are in some way or other of the nature of a talent, for which you are made accountable. For the rest, your dissertation, or rather, as I suspect, your philippic against the circle in which you move, is too sadly just. They do not derive from your presence half, nay, not a tenth part of the advantage they might, and would, if they were thoughtful and docile. But you abdicate, emphatically, the right to complain when you advert to that most stupendous instance of but partial efficiency—Him that shone a light in darkness, and "the darkness comprehended it not." At the same time, each of the "lesser lights" should be carefully trimmed, and every possible ac-

cession made to its means of burning and shining, however small a sphere of illumination it may be able to create in so dark and thick an atmosphere.

---

LXXXIII. TO THE REV. JOSEPH HUGHES.

*Bourton, November 21, 1810.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,— . . . . If I had been in the habit of writing to Battersea twice a week, I suppose an hour would quite suffice to run on a sheetful ; the longer the interval, the less one seems to know what one has to say. . . . My wife and the brat are in good health. The latter grows, frisks, and indicates the decent symptoms of approaching to something of an intelligent nature ; though it is, to be sure, rather a slender sign to be so full of exceeding wonderment at the knocking of a hammer, the ringing of glasses, or a blazing stick. But doubtless I, and even you, were once at this very same pass. He is degenerate, physically, from the genuine Yorkshire quality, for he does not walk yet, at an age at which I, and three more of us in succession, were able to march and fight. His elders keep strictly at home, save that I frequently go out hither or thither of a Sunday. . . . One of the places I have had most frequently to go to, is a town about ten miles hence, where one worthy individual, a tradesman, has been the mean of commencing, and putting in a most hopeful train, a new preaching establishment. Within a few months a very neat meeting-house, to hold perhaps four hundred people, has been raised and covered in, and is expected to be opened at the beginning of January. The man's character and intentions are so unquestionably excellent, and some such undertaking is so evidently desirable in a rather large and very heathenish town (Winchcomb, seven miles on this side Cheltenham), that he has received the most marked approbation from all us zealous people in his neighborhood, and easily obtained a number of us in rotation to preach in his house, till the meeting should be raised. He is sanguine, and I think reasonably, that the expense (near 1000*l.*) will be so far discharged, as in two or three years not to leave a very oppressive debt. . . . The meeting-house is now vested in trustees by a deed, of which one permanent condition is, the freedom for what is called mixed communion, though this projector and conductor is himself a Baptist.

. . . . It was a very serious disappointment not to see you here. . . . But when you were given up, it remained among my expectations that I should before now see you in London. But, not to mention what is centripetal on the score of affection, I have each month seemed to have something indispensable to be done at home, and not a sufficiently definite business in London. I did, however, very positively resolve and promise for a fortnight at Frome and Bristol neighborhood ; but when the intended time for that came, I had reviews to write, money to earn, and a long-pledged excursion with Coles for a few days to Worcester,

where we experienced the most friendly attentions, and indulged an active curiosity in the direction of Malvern hills, and other noble scenes. I am fully convinced, that as an intellectual manufacturer I shall need occasional change of scene, for the purpose of varying my ideas, renovating my images of beautiful nature, and avoiding the total loss of all social dexterity and pliancy of mind. My cultivation of personal religion is aided essentially by the preaching habits, which conduce also a little to keep up my acquaintance with mankind.

Studies, so to call them, continue miserably desultory, and take most wonderful care to wind along the lower, smoother grounds, meandering in all manner of directions, to avoid the high and rugged regions of metaphysic, direct science, &c. In all matter of faults, however, I am, for my age, wonderfully sanguine in my hopes of amendment, and zealous in all the resolutions relative to all the amendments. If there be one point I am less perfectly confident about, it is the practice of buying books. In this point, since I wrote last, I have been greatly tempted, and have moderately sinned. . . .

---

LXXXIV. TO JOHN SHEPPARD, ESQ.

1810, 1811.

. . . . I was lately very powerfully and suddenly struck (though certainly not for the first time) with the simple idea—Now, there is some one state of character and plan of action the very *best possible* to me, under all the circumstances of my age, measure of mental faculties, and means within my reach ; the one plan that will please the Governor of the world the most, that it will be the most pleasing to look back upon at the hour of death, the most satisfactory to hear referred to at the day of judgment ; and can I be so infatuated as not instantly and most earnestly to endeavor to ascertain what is that plan, and then most zealously devote myself to its execution ? This idea strongly recurs to me in writing to my respected friend ; and my expressing it to you in the form in which it struck myself, does not by any means imply that such reflections will not be likely often to occur to your own mind. Only we are enjoined to “provoke one another to good works ;” and this must be by suggesting the ideas that can most powerfully stimulate our conscience concerning them. There is a conceivable mode of applying all means and advantages that a thoughtful mind, in its most solemn moments, will feel very certain must be the one that our great Master will most approve, and on which he will one day the most emphatically pronounce those words, “Well done, good and faithful servant.”

. . . . Power, to its very last particle, is *duty*. To have full independence for deliberating and for entering on the best plan for future life, imposes the indispensable obligation of proceeding, without delay, to the balancing and the determination. Those who *cannot* change their

situation and mode of employment are bound to consider them as the allotment of Providence, forming their peculiar sphere of duty, in which they are to exert themselves faithfully, and to exercise patience and self-denial amidst and against involuntary feelings of dislike to the nature of that allotted sphere. But when a man has the full power, and is in the favorable season of life, to make a choice, having also the essential means for prosecuting the object of his choice effectually, whatever it may be, the mere fact of having been previously in one particular way of life surely does not, of itself, fix on him a duty of continuing in it. This would suppose him absolved from the paramount duty of considering what is the best and greatest thing he might accomplish in life. Such a notion would be as gross a superstition as that of the Chinese. At the same time it should not be overlooked, that the knowledge and aptitude acquired by the practice of such previous employment are to be considered as of the nature of a talent, of no small value, and ought, in all reason, to be the deciding weight, if the balance were, *as to all other things*, in equilibrio, between retaining the mode of employment and changing it. . . . .

---

LXXXV. TO D. PARKEN, ESQ.

*Bourton, February 7, 1812.*

. . . . . In spite of so much good advice as you have received, you are still, I understand, at that foolish project of *law*. Pray now, what *good* do you expect to do? On the grand estimate which a philosopher, philanthropist, and Christian ought to hold of the value of life, and its noblest employments, what pleasure will it be toward the conclusion of it, to have to recollect all the toils, quibbles, and jabber of that inglorious profession? Not to mention that many able men do actually linger out half a life, without obtaining, against the monopolists of the bar, even the opportunity of fairly figuring off in this jabber itself. As to getting money, making a fortune, and living in style,—surely a philosopher and Christian will and must hold such an object in contempt. It is quite time of day to make this contempt a real and practical principle of life. It is in perfect seriousness that I make such remarks. I never think without regret of your sacrificing your life and talents to that profession, which has so little connection with the highest objects to which an able young man might devote his studies and life; and a profession too that is already, and will continue to be, excessively crowded and crammed with competitors. Surely it is worth one serious hour's consideration, whether, at the approach of death, and in the ultimate appearance before the divine Judge, it would not be incomparably a more delightful recollection to have passed such a life and course of employment as that, for instance, of Fuller, or as that of Hall might be, if he were not so hopelessly idle in one respect, than the career of the most famous lawyer in the empire.

LXXXVI. TO D. PARKEN, ESQ.

*Bourton, April 30, 1812.*

. . . . No language I can easily find would exaggerate my most real, sincere, and habitual horror of the implements of writing. I long hoped that this, even though *compelled* practice, might be partly removed; but now I foresee its prevalence to the end of life. I literally never write a letter, or a page, or paragraph for printing, without an effort, which I feel a pointed repugnance to make. And this circumstance I will not at all allow to be anything negative of the truth and cordiality of my friendship for a few individuals, including among the very foremost my old master, whom it would be a most cordial luxury to see and converse with, at this or any other hour, of any day of my life; but writing—writing is one of the most grievous afflictions laid on this mortal state.

I am very glad of so good an account, so much better an account than some time since I could have hoped to hear, of your health; or rather perhaps I ought to say, I *should* be very glad if you were likely to make a good use of the inestimable possession. . . .

I believe the last thing of the nature of letter I wrote to you, and most appropriately denominated by you "trashy," was something about this topic. It made not the slightest impression, you are careful to say, in disfavor of your adopted profession. Faith! it little expected to do any such thing; nor would it have been in the least more successful, if it had been written in the best mode of Johnson or Junius. What effect had Andrew Marvell's preaching, in his time, or would the preaching of any the like of him have now, on the congregation in St. Stephen's Chapel?

But to be sober on this point just one moment, it is a remarkable and incontestable fact, that throughout the community, men of the legal profession have, as a class collectively, a much worse reputation for integrity than any other class of men not directly and formally addicted to iniquitous employments. There is a general and very decided feeling, that their consciences are of a looser texture, that they easily make their own rules of right and wrong, and that it is peculiarly hazardous and unfortunate to be thrown on their mercy, or to have any important points of interest depending on the discretion of their integrity. This is such an established impression in society, as could no have been made without an adequate cause founded in experience. Again (as I probably noticed in my last scribblement), the public and political conduct of this class of men, as exhibited during this last melancholy stage of our history, furnishes a strong proof of the general baseness of their principles. It is nearly as a *body*—it is with a most extremely small number of exceptions—that they have supported all manner of corruptions—that they have fiercely and insolently opposed all manner of reforms—that they have gone with the ministry (such a ministry as this country has been under the last twenty years!) through thick and thin. All this, or the substance of all this, it would be mere quibbling and folly to attempt

to deny. And all this being so, it is impossible for a person whose opinions shall be formed clear of the influence of any specific bias or interest, to help being convinced that there is, either in the essence of the profession, or in the established systematic spirit and mode, to which the characters of its members have reduced its practice, something extremely adverse to pure and exalted integrity, and something peculiarly destructive to political independence. The *moral* of all this is very obvious ; if a man enters the profession unaware or unbelieving of its perverting influence, and without adopting at the commencement, and maintaining in perpetuity, an extra moral discipline and regimen for preserving the rectitude of his conscience, there is too strong a probability that he will lose that rectitude irretrievably, as he advances into the thickening influences and associations of the profession. The moral might, indeed, be applied at an earlier step of the concern, making it an important question whether a man who is deeply solicitous about the moral and religious habits of his mind should enter the profession at all ; but I have supposed that question affirmatively decided, and only suggested that the person who has chosen it had need be fully aware of the quality of the *auspices* under which he has chosen to place his character, and aware of what is indispensable to defeat their malignant influence.

May I without hazard of seeming to depart from that reverence which I have ever maintained, and am resolved ever to maintain, towards an old superior and commander, hint, that I could not help, in some of the latest interviews, feeling a certain small impression, as if this influence had already begun to operate, and to give some of the indications of its nature, in a disposition—I mean in a small, incipient degree of the disposition—to put everything in question and doubt ; to be more intent on seeking exceptions to plain and important principles, than willing to *admit* their importance ; to equalize the weight of little and secondary considerations on one side of a question, with great and primary ones on the other ; to extenuate, especially in political matters, the *moral* weight and bearing of principles and practices ; and to put the whole concern somewhat in the light of a game, where we must indulge men in their play, and not to be too Catonically or Puritanically rigid upon them with moral principles ;—in short, a disposition sometimes less seriously desirous to come to the real, honest truth and importance of matter, than to try what can be said about it, and especially what can be said in contravention of that which would ascertain, and stamp, and apply, that importance ?

Doubtless my knowing (a knowledge quite general in society) that things of this kind are the prevailing characteristics of men in the legal profession, made me more prompt at surmises and perceptions ; but I was not perfectly solitary in this sort of perception ; and in this I do not allude to any *con*-domestic opinions. Now a truce to all this ; your brother is just come to take leave. I most sincerely wish him health as the grand *sine qua non* ; and then, all success in his pursuits. Perhaps



it is to be regretted that those pursuits have a preference to a certain other destination to which you allude, and to which I had some time since heard that he also had alluded. *My* regret on this point would be more decidedly expressed but for the doubt, for which I fear there is too much ground, that the kind and degree of physical effort required in frequent public speaking would be injurious to him, if not dangerous. If his health shall become, which I most earnestly wish, fully established during the few next ensuing years, I hope the question of reverting to this theological destination will become a matter of conscience with him.

But indeed he may very well *unite* the two engagements, maintaining a moderate exercise of both ; for I am for preachers having, as many of them as possible, some other sources of emolument than the precarious one of their ministerial employment.

---

LXXXVII. TO THE REV. DR. RYLAND.

*Bourton, May 20, 1812.*

MY DEAR SIR,—Dr. Cox's return, early in the morning, from a three or four days' visit here, gives me the opportunity of returning, without having recourse to any public conveyance, the books you were so kind as to lend me, so long since that I am quite ashamed to think of it. In any similar case in future, there really *must* be some legal bond, with a penalty for not returning the article lent within a specified short time. I am the less excusable in this delay, from having in my present possession (sent by Mr. Fuller I believe) the second volume 4to. of the *Ramayuna*, and the first volume of *Confucius*, wanting only the first sheet, and including the whole of the biographical introduction, concerning the Chinese philosopher.

I am amazed beyond expression at the achievements of these missionaries ; and I am *almost* glad, that so considerable a portion of their labors has been expended in translating for us the most renowned works of the East ; for thus we shall all, willing and unwilling, be brought to a right understanding of the vaunted wisdom of the orientals, which had left no need of such a thing as Christianity. As to the *absolute* value of what we thus obtain, one really begins to doubt, whether all that will ever be brought from the treasures of Asiatic learning, will be worth much more than the song of Chevy Chase.

With respect to the Chinese, a grand object is gained by our having now fairly got a way opened into that hitherto formidable and inaccessible language, for the introduction of the Christian truth by means of the translations that will now be easily made into it of the Bible, and other volumes of sound instruction.

I most sincerely wish you continued health to sustain you in your unwearied and diversified labors in the cause of Christ ; and am, with friendly remembrance to Mrs. Ryland, my dear sir,

Yours, most respectfully and cordially,

J. FOSTER.

## LXXXVIII. TO D. PARKEN, ESQ.

Bourton, June 30, 1812

MY DEAR SIR,—It is a long enough time since I received your letter, but it can never be too long to remember favors and services, nor be impertinent to acknowledge them. I was not pleased with myself for having caused you so much trouble. . . . Accept my grateful acknowledgment that there is, at least, one benevolent individual in the profession of the law.

. . . . I am setting off, in a few hours, for North Wales, where I am to climb Snowdon, Cader Idris, &c. ; hunt the goats, roll stones down the declivities, and lose for a while the corrosion of the "*sæva indignatio*," against wicked men in power; and, shall I say? of my remorse, for having cruelly wronged, by unjust opinion and practical slander, a meek, simple-hearted, innocent class of saints, distinguished externally by wig and gown.

. . . . You are at Cobbett again. It is considerably amusing to see what an air of *superfine morality* (as Sydney Smith would say) and sanctified alarm you London gentry assume whenever he comes in question; just as if *any* of us care a straw for anything he says, *on the ground of his personal morality*, or for *any other reason* than so much truth and intellectual force as his writings display. But you talk of his "truths not less dangerous than his falsehoods," which is just the kind of lingo with which people are endeavored to be, and partly are, perplexed, frightened, and gulled, into an acquiescence with all the corruptions and mischiefs of the political state and course of things, while he is plainly and boldly enforcing a few great obvious principles, and illustrating them by a perpetual reference to facts. *He* was plainly stating and predicting, all along, how our management as to America *must* operate;—behold the consequence of despising all he said. *He* has all along urged the necessity of concession to the Catholics, and the abolition of flogging; he was "a pestilent sower of sedition," as you say, for his pains; but how odd it is that the whole state is coming round to him so fast! *He* predicted the whole process of the paper-money, and warned against augmenting the evil;—it was all seditious and *false*, for it has been substantially fulfilled. *He* has constantly represented, that a parliament constituted like ours, will scorn all checks on the waste of public money;—seditious and *false*—as witness the whole system of our outgoings, and not last nor least, the vast increasing accounts of sinecures and pensions, and twenty more such things; all "*dangerous falsehoods*;" or are these exposures the "*dangerous, the equally dangerous truths*?" that is, *the fact of these things being true* is quite a harmless matter, but for Cobbett to *tell* that they are true, is very "*dangerous*," "*seditious*," and "*pestilent*." But I had all this over with W— not long since, and I have not the least liking to go it over again. Only it amazes one, that Cobbett's dubious morality, and his being erroneous perhaps now and then

in minor points (for in the great matters the business is too bulky and palpable for much deception or falsehood), should really have the effect to turn so much urgent and awful truth into such comfortable falsehood, that the nation may sleep quite at its ease! . . . .

LXXXIX. TO THE REV. JOSEPH HUGHES.

*Bourton, September 1, 1812.*

. . . . Your life and adventures resound through the "united kingdom," and really have been so moving and multifarious, that I should think you must have nearly the same crowded confusion of review as our old acquaintance, who is probably at this very time amusing himself among the curiosities of Moscow—getting the great Bell slung, perhaps, or some such thing. I greatly exult in the *practical* part of the business you are prosecuting, in so many directions, in the *main effect* of journeys, meetings, spoutings, and roarings; but, to be sure, the *manner* of it is infinitely abominable. In all time there surely never was a concern that brought out such a quantity of bad rhetoric—inflated, common-place, egotistical ostentation, nauseous cajolery, and reciprocated flattery, and mock-heroic pomp of triumph, for having crushed a spider, or marched in the desperate spirit of martyrdom through a bed of nettles. This last characteristic, especially, glares out to a degree intensely ridiculous. To hear some of the speechmakers, one would really suppose (but for the bombastic cast of the language) that one was hearing Wickliffe or Luther exulting in having thus far braved the terrors of the Roman bulls and the Inquisition. Nothing of these charges, or but a trifle, attaches to you personally; and you must very often have suffered a provoking temptation to rebuke the rant of your occasional coadjutors, not to say any of your more permanent ones. . . .

XC. TO HIS PARENTS.

*Bourton, September 1, 1812.*

. . . . The burning of the printing-office at Serampore has produced a great sensation in the religious public, and a multitude of very liberal contributions have been made to repair the disaster. This place is seldom behind in charitable exertions. Last Sunday Mr. Coles preached one sermon and I another, with relation to this event; a subscription and collection have been made, and the result is, I believe, between eighty and ninety pounds, contributed in this and two neighboring villages towards restoring the full means and powers of that grand oriental magazine for the warfare against the pagan gods and all abominations. My text was, Jer. xliii. 12, "I will kindle a fire in the houses of the gods."

It is exceedingly gratifying, while wars and devastations and all man-

ner of iniquities are deluging the earth, to observe what a most extraordinary spirit has been awakened by the promotion of knowledge and religion. It is peculiarly a happy sign for our nation, amidst all its weight of demerits and calamities.

. . . . Of late I have had to preach every Sunday, and generally twice. It has not, as yet, brought back the old debility ; whether the prolonged continuance of it would do so, I do not know. Nor am I at all likely or inclined to engage anywhere as a stated, constant preacher to a congregation. Certainly the pecuniary resource that would arise from such an engagement would be a serviceable thing ; but I shall be able to live without that resource, and there is a great deal more freedom attending the way of preaching I am now in. I can now preach or refuse to preach according to my own convenience, and am conferring obligations without incurring any ; while the usefulness may be nearly as great, I should hope, as if I preached in a more stated way. The preparation for preaching in this way, too, takes less time from my other intellectual business than if I were a constant preacher in one place. It has also the advantage (so long as I am in this neighborhood) of taking me out into the air sometimes, by necessity, and so counteracts the bad effect of keeping constantly within the house, which I do very much. . . .

---

XCI. TO HIS PARENTS.

*Bourton, February, 1813.*

. . . . It is still gratifying to advert to the good designs that are going on, though their magnitude and the rate of their progress be so far behind the designs of evil. This disparity, however, we trust will lessen, and is lessening every day. The great loss at Serampore is now, it seems, more than made up by the public liberality ; so that that eastern warfare against Satan will have suffered but a very slight suspension, to be renewed with still greater zeal and means of offence. Every successive year's accounts from the missionaries there, is still more gratifying than the former. The last much surpasses any of the preceding. There never was on earth a set of men more faithful to a great object, nor, as to the principals of them, at least, more excellently qualified for it. To me it is constantly a cause of wonder, by what art, by what almost preternatural faculty, it is possible for human beings to accomplish so much as they are incessantly doing. It is the utmost possible exertion of mortal industry, but doubtless it is also a very extraordinary measure of divine assistance. The doctrine of divine assistance, the gracious agency of the Holy Spirit, is infinitely consolatory to me—a doctrine without which I should sink into despondency and despair. What a long course of experience you have had of its truth and its value, and how emphatic a testimony you could, at each recollection of past life, bear to the preciousness of this part of the gospel. It stands next to the doctrine of

atonement by the sacrifice of Christ, in its power of animating the soul, and saving it from the overwhelming force of a world of evil. . . .

---

XCII. TO HIS MOTHER.

*Bourton, September, 1814.*

DEAR AND HONORED MOTHER,—I have little that is new to mention this time. Since I wrote last, however, I have been at Worcester, which is a considerable number of hours' ride from hence. I was applied to, to preach a Sunday for the Baptist minister there, who is in a dangerous state of health. . . . There are a number of the faithful, one here and one there, just on the point of quitting the earth; and what a change it will be, to quit such a scene to enter immediately into the heavenly paradise. One is continually hearing of some one or other who has finished the mortal course, and of others who are evidently nearly on the point of doing it, in the devout and grateful confidence of entering the eternal kingdom. *They* can have little to make them wish to stay on earth. But one is still willing to hope—indeed, cannot help rather confidently hoping—that before all the present inhabitants of the earth shall be called to remove from it, there will be such a transformation of its moral condition, that an aged Christian will have really somewhat *less* cause to be earnest for his departure than in such a time and state of things as the present. A good man, though glad to go to heaven, will nevertheless have somewhat less loathing of the earth that he is going to escape from, when he leaves it abounding in the blessed effects of Christianity; when the people of his family, of his neighborhood, and of his nation, are become, or are rapidly becoming, the genuine, zealous, and holy disciples and servants of Christ.

Kidderminster, where Baxter preached with such marvellous success, being at no great distance from Worcester, I took a ride thither with one or two friends, and walked a long time in and about the church in which he preached, and in which the people, it is said, are now taught no doctrines similar to his. His pulpit remained till within a few years back, when it was removed as an old-fashioned thing. We went to see it, where it is carefully preserved in the vestry of a *Socinian* meeting-house. An ancient-looking inscription carved on it, shows it to be nearly two hundred years old, being placed in the church many years before Baxter preached there. It is small, of oak, quite sound and firm, and is decorated with old carving, painting, and gilding, in a manner which must have been strangely gaudy; insomuch, that, unless this was common in those days, one could almost fancy Baxter must have been displeased with so showy an object every time he looked at it. It was striking to stand in this pulpit, and reflect what a saintly and apostolic man had often occupied it; what an eloquence of piety had been, with almost miraculous efficacy, poured from it; and what the state of that

preacher may be now ! It was impossible not to feel some emotions of sorrow at having been so little like him, and of desire to be more enabled and animated to follow him as he followed Christ.

With very great interest of a widely different kind, we viewed, at a place not far distant, some stupendous iron-works, where we saw many operations of prodigious power, by means of engines ; and, among other curious sights, gazed at a kind of *cascade* of iron, violently streaming down in a state apparently as fluid as water. The brilliance and the formidableness of this object were most striking. There were several chimneys nearly, we were told, *three hundred feet* high ; and there was a great iron wheel, which we were assured, on what appeared very good authority, is computed to revolve much more than three hundred miles in an hour. I am glad to have seen these various objects, as I am to have beheld anything curious and wonderful, on account of the new ideas they fix in the mind. By a proper application these become of great value to a man whose business is to be mental.

---

#### XCIII. TO HIS MOTHER.

*Bourton, October, 1914.*

MY DEAR AND HONORED MOTHER—. . . The poor people in *agricultural* parts of the land are generally extremely ignorant, and dull of apprehension. They are considerably more so than the people of manufacturing districts. Field occupations, with their attendant and consequent habits, notoriously tend to stupify the mental faculties. So that one sometimes almost despairs of making such things as *ideas* palpable to their apprehension. One has often the mortification of perceiving, that the plainest, most pointed, and repeated representations of pure truth and invisible things, fail to reach, so to speak, the vital region of the mind. It is to many who do hear a sound of speaking, just the same, as to the mind, as if nothing at all were said. The thoughts are not taken hold of ; they do not distinctly make themselves present one moment to the understandings or imaginations of those to whom they are directed.

From such an experience of what men are, one is receiving continual corroboration of the conviction, that nothing less than a divine power can effectually arrest and awaken men's minds ; and therefore a strong incitement to invoke the intervention of that irresistible power. But at the same time, that power itself seems to prefer for the subjects of its operations the class of minds that are previously taught and influenced by education, and habitual attention to knowledge. This seems a general rule, though here and there the sovereignty of the power and the independence of its operations are evinced, illustrated, and honored, by the conversion of some of the most desperately uncultivated and untoward of the human race.

It is exceedingly gratifying to consider, how much more generally the rudiments of religious and other knowledge will be possessed by the next generation than they are by the present; in consequence of the extension of the means of education, and the rapid and vast diffusion of the Bible; so that preachers twenty years hence, will have a more pleasing office than they have had hitherto. Already some effect begins to be apparent. And the mere circumstance, that the hearers of the Christian ministrations are increasing prodigiously every year, in numbers, is a happy, and a hopeful sign of the times. Aged Christians may justly be grateful for it as one of the consolations granted to the evening of their laborious day of life, that the Almighty gives indications, that he is going to accomplish the prophetic assurances of a grand improvement of the world, and that the young pious friends they are going to leave behind, will, if they live to old age, have seen far happier times than their predecessors who are now on the verge of the world.

There is nothing particularly new in this neighborhood, except the opening last week of a new Methodist chapel in a small town a few miles off, where I have often been to preach. I am very glad of it, however I may differ from their opinions; for their active and indefatigable zeal is sure to do good, incomparably more good, I trust, than harm. . . . We are all in good health. I prayed earnestly this morning, and have often done so, that "the *goodness* of God may lead us to repentance;" that being attracted to him in devout affection by his mercies, we may be saved from the necessity of being disciplined to obedience and dependence by judgments of the severe order.

I am always sorry to think of you at the return of winter, which is now once more so fast approaching. One of the venerable persons to whom, and for whom I have so often before expressed this feeling, is now beyond the reach of winters, and all the worse evils of this world. How often he mistakenly expected he should never suffer another winter; but there was an appointed time to realize his expectations; and that time is come, and is past! How full of mystery, and wonder, and solemnity, is the thought of where he may be now, and what his employments, and how divine the rapture of feeling with infinite certainty, that he has begun a never-ending life of progressive joy and glory! The consideration of this will be an animated consolation to you in the sojourn which you are left behind to finish; and I hope it will be an incitement to each of his relatives to wish and pray ardently, "Let me die the death of the righteous."

---

#### XCIV. TO HIS MOTHER.

*Bourton, December, 1814.*

DEAR AND HONORED MOTHER,—It is such a gloom of winter, that I can but just see to write, though it is about mid-day. We have had

something very like a storm for a whole week past, in a constant series of violent winds and rain. It has occurred to me how dreary it must have been on your bleak hills, if there has been a similar season there. Having lately read a good deal of the accounts of voyagers, I am forcibly reminded what formidable scenes a multitude of human beings are now exposed in at sea. I expect to hear many accounts of perils and disasters on that element; for I have no remembrance of so long a continuance of tempestuous winds. How many times and occasions there are which, if they make one think of the world at large, make one think of it as a vast scene of calamity. And how strange and mournful it is, that men should, nevertheless, be so generally careless of availing themselves of the Almighty refuge. I have just been inspecting a long and most interesting and striking account of the bold and often perilous enterprises of a foreign traveller, during several years, in which he traversed many thousands of miles, often in wild and formidable regions, and I do not recollect meeting with even one single reference to a protecting Providence. He seems well disposed to take to himself all the praise of his safety and success. This sort of impiety I find very prevalent among this class of adventurers, with whose narratives I have been almost daily conversant for a good part of this last year, my literary task-business having been very much in that department. It is a kind of reading besides which I have had a great liking for from my childhood. You can recollect with what interest and eagerness, when I was a boy, I read everything I could obtain relating to the strange objects and adventures in distant regions, and how confidently and almost enthusiastically I anticipated and projected, that I should myself become a travelling adventurer, and see almost all the wonderful places and spectacles of which I read.

A different lot was intended for me by the Sovereign Disposer; but the same *taste* will no doubt remain as long as I live, its mode of gratification being nearly confined to the reading or hearing of *other* men's adventures and wonderful sights. And this kind of reading, while it is very entertaining, and on that account would be very tempting even if it were of no use, is capable, at the same time, of supplying the most valuable assistance to thought, and the most striking and useful illustrations to the religious and moral teacher, whether in preaching or in writing. I hardly ever preach without availing myself of something I have met with in books of travels; and remarkable facts, pertinently introduced, will sometimes produce a striking effect: they awaken attention, which is itself no small matter.

While thus reading travels into remote and wonderful scenes, I am often struck with the thought, what a far more signal and important journey than all this awaits myself, and how much more marvellous the regions that will ere long be opened to my view; and therefore, so far as the passion for wonders is concerned, I may be content to wait till called to go on a mysterious expedition to some other world. Mean-



while, I earnestly hope and pray, that the intervening space of time may be very much and effectually employed in a solemn and judicious preparation for that greatest of enterprises. It is most striking to reflect how many of our friends, and the persons we knew, and habitually saw around us, have already gone. They do not come to tell us where they have been, and what they have beheld. Well, we shall not need their information; we shall go ourselves into the unknown scene. And I humbly trust in the divine mercy, we shall be met and welcomed, at the moment of our quitting this world, by a friendly and powerful Guide, into whose hands we may gladly commit our departing spirits.

---

XCV. TO MRS. BUNN.

*Bourton, January 28.*

MY DEAR MADAM, . . . . My visit was extremely gratifying, even in spite of that tedious though trivial task which occupied so much of the earlier part of the time. I will take care next time (and might have taken care then, by a little previous management and industry) to be exempted from any such interference with social satisfactions—perhaps I should say *duties*, for I was ashamed not to call on my good friends of the humbler order. As a matter of entertainment I was very sorry not to be able to accompany the ladies on another excursion to see those most noble old friends of ours, the *oaks* at Longleat.

On the Sunday morning, I heard one of the very wildest of the Wesleyan Methodists—a man with the northern provincial brogue and grammar fresh upon him, and in point of intellectual discipline a perfect wild ass's colt. By way of contrast I went directly to the Abbey Church, and heard a consequential looking ecclesiastic read a sermon sensible in its way, and partly directed against the assumption by one class of preachers of the distinctive denomination—Evangelical. At Argyle Chapel, in the evening, I heard a very highly sensible sermon from Mr. East.

The effects of the season were not so far on their progress about Bristol as in your neighborhood. But I had no time to take much notice of the last lingering beauty, or for any excursions for the mere purpose of looking about—except once so far beyond Bristol as St. Vincent's rocks, which, in an excessively cold and wet day, I contrasted with the magnificence of some of the scenes of North Wales. But even had there been higher rocks, and finer days, there was a circumstance capable of rendering them for a while matters of inferior interest. That circumstance was no other than my falling once more, after many years' interval, into the company of Coleridge, who was at the time lecturing and talking in Bristol.

I could not conveniently hear more than one of his lectures (on *Shakspeare*), but it was a still higher luxury to hear him talk as much

as would have been two or three lectures. I use the word *luxury*, however, not without some very considerable qualification of its usual meaning, since it may not seem exactly descriptive of a thing involving much severe labor,—and this one is forced often to undergo in the endeavor to understand him, his thinking is of so surpassingly original and abstracted a kind. This is the case often even in his recitals of facts, as that recital is continually mixed with some subtle speculation. It was perfectly wonderful, in looking back on a few hours of his conversation, to think what a quantity of perfectly original speculation he had uttered, in language incomparably rich in ornament and new combinations. In point of theological opinion, he is become, indeed has now a number of years been, it is said, highly orthodox. He wages victorious war with the Socinians, if they are not, which I believe they now generally are, very careful to keep the peace in his company. His mind contains an astonishing mass of all sorts of knowledge, while in his power and manner of putting it to use, he displays more of what we mean by the term genius than any mortal I ever saw or ever expected to see. He is still living in a wandering, precarious, and comfortless way, perpetually forming projects which he has not the steady resolution to prosecute long enough to accomplish. His appearance indicates much too evidently, that there is too much truth in the imputation of intemperance. It is very likely he beguiles his judgment and conscience by the notion of an exciting effect to be produced on his faculties by strong fluids. I have not heard that he ever goes the length of disabling himself for the clearest mental operation, but certainly he indulges to a degree that, if not forborne, will gradually injure his faculties and health. It is probable he is haunted by an incurable restlessness, a constant, permanent sense of infelicity. This has been augmented, doubtless, by the total deficiency of domestic satisfactions.

---

XCVI. TO HIS MOTHER.

*Bourton, April, 1815.*

DEAR AND HONORED MOTHER,—. . . My good wife has taken great pains with John, and he can now read readily enough, in any of the easier sort of books. Her health has somewhat suffered by the long harassing anxiety about the youngest child, during the precarious state of his health and life. As the fine season is coming on, I hope she will recover whatever she has lost. What an incalculable measure of care it is that a mother has in rearing a few of these human creatures; and then to think with what perfect indifference the monarchs of Europe are at this very hour, devoting, in all probability, several hundreds of thousands of such creatures, reared quite to maturity, to die in battles and hospitals within the next three or four months!

I may presume, that the season has been with you, as here, unusually

mild, and so far indulgent to the infirmities of old age. There is here scarcely any remembrance of a spring so advanced in point of vegetation at the end of April. The apple-trees are opening their blossoms, and all is beautiful around. This is not, however, a favorable situation for seeing nature to advantage; our views are so confined, and so destitute of anything striking and romantic in form. I often regret, especially when reading books of travels, with perhaps fine engravings of sublime or beautiful scenes, that it should have been my lot to spend so considerable a part of my life in a place so completely removed from the magnificence of nature,—from the mountains, the rocks, the torrents, the cataracts, or the sea-shore, the view of which I know, by transient experience, to be so animating and enchanting to the imagination. This has been not only so much lost to me in point of pleasure—that is ever a secondary consideration; what I still more regret is the loss of what such scenes often habitually beheld, would have added to the treasury of ideas in my mind, ideas of great value for illustrating and animating the course of thought and discourse, in all the modes of instruction—by writing, preaching, social talking, and even social prayer. If any considerable portion of life yet remain to me, I hope that Providence will so favor me with respect to place of residence, that I shall yet obtain a good share of this advantage, so important as I know it to be for the enrichment of imagination. I have had one valuable compensation for this deprivation, in the opportunity of seeing some of the most sumptuous and splendid books of voyages and travels, with engravings of many of the most remarkable objects and scenes in the world. . . . This has really been a valuable advantage of my connection with booksellers and reviewing. . . .

It often occurs to me, when thinking of, and regretting not being permitted to see the striking scenes of this globe, how soon I shall be summoned to see things inexpressibly more striking and awful, in the unknown world to which departing spirits will take their flight. May what remains of life be above all things devoted to the great concern of being prepared for that inevitable and marvellous flight and vision. Which of us is to go first remains yet to be seen. The one of our number that had the longest dwelt on this earth has taken the lead, and has now beheld what is infinitely beyond all mortal conception.

I can have no doubt, that both you and my old friend S. T., amidst the daily weight of infirmity, find the promise fulfilled of strength equal to the day, and so you know it will be to the very last hour. "He is faithful that has promised." He is sure to take especial care of those who are comparatively soon to be with him in heaven.

---

XCVII. TO MISS B——.

*Bourton, August 22, 1815.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,—We have been returned hither this nine or ten days, during which I have been repeatedly reminded by Maria, in a tone

become quite reproachful at last, of the kindness which requested to hear soon after our return, and as in all other cases, I have still answered—To-morrow. Most things she can compel me to do, within some tolerable bounds of time; but to *write*, there I am beyond her power—that is a thing in which Fate alone can rule me.

We extended our term of dissipation a full week beyond what I reckoned on as the very utmost limit, when we were at F. So long as Hall was to be heard, and Mr. J. S. was expected to be seen, there was something very plausible to be pleaded; but when both these gratifications were past, it was quite time for sober thoughts, and a return to the garret; but the event proved that there was nearly another week to be expended. On one of the days I took a round of about thirty miles on horseback, in company with a very clever and excellent young man, a barrister that is going to be. We went to Brockley Combe, Dundry, &c. Another of the days we contrived to get into the house of Mr. Hart Davis, the member for Bristol, to see several celebrated pictures. Though totally ignorant of painting, as an art, it was impossible not to be exceedingly delighted with several grand landscapes of Claude Lorraine, and a countenance by Leonardo da Vinci, intended for the Messiah previously to his incarnation—a countenance I should really think never yet equalled, nor hereafter to be equalled, in painting or in reality. On quitting these rooms of enchantment, I could not help admitting the hint, that, in spite of all that philosophers have said, wealth *has* some advantages. Four or five of the pictures, taken together, are accounted worth, I believe, £20,000. Though not of so magnificent an order, we saw a number of very fine performances of the great foreign painters, at a house not a mile from Dr. C.'s. A number of the landscapes were of extreme beauty, by Vernet, Ruysdael, &c., &c. I cannot exactly judge whether I should, on the whole, like a room so illuminated for a habitual place of reading, musing, or, if I may use the word, *study*; but I think I should like it, for that it would do more good in the way of brightening and enriching imagination, than it would do harm in the way of diverting attention. A considerable portion of another day I spent in examining the splendid part of the Bristol city library, where there are probably ten thousand volumes; but my attention was nearly confined to about a dozen—the costly books of engravings relating to Athens, Palmyra, Rome, &c., &c. Another portion of the same day, and some hours of another day, were spent in Mr. Cottle's study, under benefit of special privilege to read a variety of MS. letters of Southey, Coleridge, &c. I received but a melancholy account of this last sublime and unhappy genius, who continues the slave and victim, I now fear hopelessly, of that wretched habit which has already, in a measure, obscured and humiliated the most extraordinary faculties I have ever yet seen resident in a form of flesh and blood. His own reproaches, I understand, are more bitter than any that he can hear from a fellow-mortal; but still unavailing. Hughes tells me in mingled language of admiration and compassion, that he made, a week

or two since in Wiltshire, at a Bible Society meeting where Hughes was, a speech of profound intelligence; only, as was to be expected, too abstract for a popular occasion.

Hall was the grand attraction in Bristol. We heard him as often as six times, besides a speech he made at the public meeting respecting the National Education Society, at which Mackintosh was expected, but was unable to attend. There were fully four hours of close, dense speech-making. A great deal of good sense was uttered, and with less cajolery and impertinence than one often hears on such occasions. Hall's acute and witty speech could not, unfortunately, be heard by one half the assembly. I was sorry Mr. S. could not have been apprised of this meeting; but he lost still more in not being at Broadmead on the evening of the same day (Tuesday), where Hall made, I should think it hardly extravagant to suppose, the noblest sermon ever heard within those walls, or even within that city; the text—"Hast thou made all men in vain?" It combined all the elements of supremacy in religious eloquence. It was explanatory, argumentative, ingenious, comprehensive, and sublime; it was emphatically solemn and applicatory to conscience, with a pathetic earnestness and emotion toward the latter end, which was almost irresistible. He was himself, in one part of the concluding division, very deeply moved; and there is something strangely striking in the unaffected and insuppressible emotion of a strong, firm, masculine, and intrepid person like him, with a temperament partaking much of that kind of hardness which does not feel slight impressions or gentle interests. We had him at Dr. C.'s one night, and a good part of next day, and I was in his company several times in Bristol. Company, however, he says, and I believe truly, he likes less and less each successive year. With very great devotion, I apprehend there is almost a habitual shade of gloom over his mind; besides, that he endures so much corporal suffering, and is certain to do so as long as he lives. . . . You may not have seen his book, "Terms of Communion;" it is very able, and one should think conclusive and final; but one is not much pleased to see such a mind so long occupied on a subject giving so little scope or occasion for the exercise of his more eloquent thinking.

---

#### XCVIII. TO HIS MOTHER.

*Bourton, November, 1815.*

DEAR AND HONORED MOTHER,—Since I wrote last I have been almost as invariably shut up in the house as if I had been a prisoner. I have been reading, in a cursory sort of way, a variety of things, in English, Latin, and French; among other things a considerable portion of Virgil, whom I am ashamed to have never fairly read through since I was at Mr. Fawcett's school. I do not know that I should now have particularly thought of reading him but for the accident of having obtained

possession of a particularly fine copy of him, accompanied by an ample commentary, by a most learned German, who employed a great part of twenty years of his life in illustrating this poet.

Some parts of what I have read have powerfully recalled the circumstances and feelings of a period so long since elapsed as the time of my residence at *Brearley Hall*. That period appears long since, even during these recollections. How striking it is to consider, that I am now materially more than twenty years nearer to an entrance into another world than then! If I had then been sure of living till now, it would have appeared a very wide space for a certainty of future life; and what great things (in a comparative sense) I should have confidently hoped to accomplish within it. But indeed, the uncertainty of that prolongation of life—the improbability of life being protracted more than four-and-twenty years beyond the moment of my bidding adieu to *Brearley Hall*, ought to have made me but the more earnest and diligent to turn every week and day to the best account. I have now to review that long period as irrevocably past. And I review it with great regret. I have not, I hope, altogether lived in vain; but my attainments for myself, my usefulness to others, my service to God, have been miserably small, in comparison of what they might, with such means, and in such a space, have been. I have many gloomy musings on the subject, in which I can easily represent to myself this and the other good thing which has been possible, but has not been accomplished, during that long space of health and privileges—the best part of life, beyond comparison. It has been a space of time, in all probability, worth much more in point of capability than all the rest of my life; that is, all that preceded the time I left *Brearley*, taken together with all that may yet remain, even should I live to attain your present age, which is altogether unlikely.

Nevertheless, so perverse and stupid is this human nature, that even these melancholy reflections, combined with all the solemnity of my anticipations, do not always suffice to rouse me to that earnestness and practical exertion which I feel to be, if possible, still more urgently my duty every day that now comes to me; every day which is lessening the perhaps brief remainder. Upon the whole, however, I hope I do feel an increasing force of conscience and religion, and therefore an increasing solicitude, that whatever remains of my time on earth may be so employed and improved, that I may not, at the end, have the same feelings concerning it, that I now have concerning the last twenty-five years.

It is one important advantage gained by the past time to be most powerfully and habitually convinced that divine aid is indispensable, in a very large measure, to our making the best and noblest improvement of life. That aid I shall supplicate every day that I have to spend on earth.

My business is clearly before me; what I have to do is to preach and write; which I must endeavor to do more and better than hitherto; especially more in a religious spirit, with a more direct reference and desire to please God.

## XCIX. TO HIS MOTHER.

*Bourton, December, 1815.*

HONORED MOTHER,—In this remote corner everything almost seems to remain as when I wrote last. Thus it is from month to month. One is often struck with the thought, how little one has a perception of, amidst the infinity of things that are acting and changing, at every moment, in this vast creation. But indeed, within a comparatively small space around one, millions of acts and incidents are occurring, of which one is perfectly insensible. What processes of nature, what movements of human minds, what agency of invisible intelligences! What a spirit would that be that should have a perfect perception, comprehending the whole and every part, of what takes place within a very small portion of even one country on the globe! What a stupendous intelligence, that should be able, in this manner, to inspect the whole earth, with all its beings and elements! But, then, how overwhelming is the idea of THAT ONE MIND, whose perception extends to *everything, great and little, inanimate, living, and intellectual*, in the WHOLE UNIVERSE, comprehending, perhaps, such a number of worlds as it would require an angel's faculties but to *count*! How utterly and instantly the power of thought is confounded and lost in any attempt at forming the idea of such a Being! It is useful, nevertheless, to exercise the mind sometimes in this manner. It tends to produce humiliation and self-abasement, and to inspire a holy awe. But, also, it tends to inspire joy, and gratitude, and triumph, when we consider that this Being condescends to be the friend of humble, and contrite, and devout men; that he has revealed himself as a pardoning and gracious God, through the mediation of Christ; that through this "new and living way" his throne may be approached with hope and confidence. And then there is the sublime idea of his taking the souls of his servants, at death, to contemplate him in a more intimate manner, to be expanded to an angelic and for ever enlarging capacity in that blissful contemplation and communion, and to receive to all eternity perpetually augmenting manifestations of his love. In such a view, with what emotions may you look forward to the termination of your mortal pilgrimage! and with what grateful joy look back on that influence of divine grace, which early in life persuasively compelled you into his service, and has preserved you constant in it ever since! . . .

I still preach, one where or other, every Sunday; and there would be work enough of this kind within a small circuit hereabouts, for an additional supernumerary. I wish exceedingly that there were in our societies a much greater number of such sensible and educated men as might be serviceably employed in frequent preaching, without being of what is called the regular class of preachers. . . .

My wish for this *John* would be, that he might become one day a zealous and effectual proclaimer of divine truth; just such a one as I have before mentioned to you in the instance of a highly-cultivated

young man, . . . . who is lately returned from an excursion for improvement through France and to Geneva. . . . .

---

## C. TO HIS MOTHER.

*Bourton, March, 1816.*

HONORED MOTHER,— . . . . Worcester is only a six or seven hours' journey from this village. The surrounding country is, in spring and summer, very beautiful. In the road, between Worcester and this place, is that town of *Pershore*, where I spent a number of weeks so long since, previously to going to Ireland. Some interesting reflections were suggested to me in passing through it, and glancing over the course of the river Avon, on the banks of which I had so often walked in solitary musings, wondering what might be the appointed course of my future life in this world, and forming plans and resolutions. How little of these plans and resolutions has been accomplished! those, I mean, which ought to have been accomplished; those which were of a nature independent of the places in which I might be cast;—those which related to the efforts, the improvements, the attainments, which were my absolute duty, *wherever* I might afterwards dwell or wander. How impossible it would have then been, when I traversed those meadows, by that stream;—how impossible to believe it, if any one could have predicted to me that, passing by the place twenty-three years afterwards, I should have the mournful consciousness of having accomplished so little of all I then was so sanguine in anticipating:—if my life and health should be so long protracted by an indulgent Providence! No, I could not have believed it. I did not then know so much of the depravity, the treachery, of the heart of man.

Another thing I could hardly have believed, could it have been then predicted,—namely, that my life, if it should prove, for twenty years, so unprofitable, would be attended all the while, nevertheless, by so many favors of the divine Providence, so constant a train of things at once indulgent and admonitory.

And still another thing,—it would have been at that time impossible for me to believe, if it could have been declared to me, that when I should have spent twenty years so favored and yet so unprofitable a servant, I should not feel on the review, at the beginning of the year 1816, a much severer grief, a much intenser self-indignation, than at this hour I actually do feel. How strangely one grows accustomed to one's own faults, and perversities, and sins, so as to have a criminal patience with them. Yet though I feel far too little on such a review, I do nevertheless feel greatly indignant at this ingratitude, this indolence, this want of zeal, this wretched deficiency of every grace and virtue of Christianity. I do in some measure, and I hope an increasing measure, hate this indwelling sin, this cold indifference, this procrastination, this dread



of taking up the cross. And I do, I hope I shall, each succeeding day, more apply to the almighty power; "fly to the Lord for quick relief." At last I hope to say, exultingly, "Sin, the monster, bleeds and dies." . . .

We are all hereabouts, as everywhere else, deeply complaining of the times, and reproaching the bad men that preside over the state, and who manifest a scornful indifference on the subject, intent only to accomplish their own vain and vile purposes. But we are over-run with men just as unprincipled, in a lower condition. . . .

---

#### CI. TO HIS MOTHER.

*Bourton-on-the-Water, May, 1816.*

HONORED MOTHER,—The balmy influences of spring at length breathe into the room in which I am writing, and I have just been admiring the beauty of an apple-tree, and a few other trees now in full bloom. But this appearance has not, for a very long time, been so late in the spring. No one, scarcely, remembers so backward and ungenial a season as we have had this year. Snow has fallen within these few days. The consequence of this long rigor is, that now, when the vernal softness is at length come, the vegetation, with all its beauty, has come out as with a sudden burst; insomuch, that a very few days have made a prodigious alteration in the appearance all around; the earth seems almost as if it had undergone a miracle, in order to make it a proper place of abode for a purer, better kind of beings.

But, alas! the inhabiting beings remain the same; a debased, irreligious, iniquitous, and miserable race. Nature has no gales, no beauties, no influences, to transform the depraved mind. The benignant skies, the living verdure, the hues of flowers, the notes of birds, have no power on selfish and malignant passions, on inveterate evil habits, on ingratitude and hostility against God. And it is all just the same, notwithstanding that the scene not only has so much beauty, and is such a manifestation of the divine power, but also is equally a display of the divine bounty, this opening beauty being a part of the grand process for the sustenance of man.

What a base and odious thing is this human nature! How multiplied and endless are the exhibitions of its abominable state! All the inhabited world is overspread with them. I feel a peculiar interest and complacency in reading (in the many books of travels that come into my hands) of wildernesses and ruins. It gratifies me to read of this or the other city or district; that whereas it once contained perhaps half a million of inhabitants, there are now not a fifth part of the number;—that there are towers, castles, and mansions, and temples, and streets, deserted, dilapidated, falling in ruins;—that the lonely traveller may traverse leagues and leagues of the region, and meet no face, and see no abode of man. I involuntarily exclaim, "So much the better; how

little there is, in that abandoned territory, of the abomination and misery with which *man* is sure to fill every place in which his race abounds !”

With something of this, mingled with other modes of interest, I read lately a small book, recently published, concerning the *Ruins of Babylon*. It is by a young man, whom I remember seeing at Bristol ten or twelve years since as a boy, remarkably distinguished by his eastern learning. He now resides at Bassora, only a few days’ journey from Babylon. He wrote this account after one visit of examination to the place of that proud city. The place is marked by enormous masses of bricks, the foundations of the vast edifices which, in Daniel’s time, towered aloft, amidst the stupendous accumulations of ordinary structures for human dwelling. There is now (as far as I remember) *not a man dwelling there!* In clearing some secret vaulted passages, he found several human skeletons. What a striking sight this would be ! while a crowd of solemn recollections came over one’s mind. In one most enormous mass of bricks, in a great measure covered with mould and vegetation, he had little doubt he beheld the remains of the celebrated tower of Nimrod. There is one part exposed, as a wall, and it is two hundred feet high. . . .

---

#### CII. TO HIS MOTHER.

*Bourton, August, 1816*

HONORED MOTHER,— . . . I am still very far from having worked off my accumulated tasks in the reviewing way. I am sorry for having got so much into this kind of service ; it has its uses, but it has been in some measure a prevention of things that might have been more extensively, and more lastingly useful. I fully intend to withdraw, in a great measure, from the occupation, in order to attend to those more useful labors. But I have at the very least eight or nine months’ work on hand, some parts of which have been very long, and almost inexcusably delayed. I have no power of getting fast forward in any literary task ; it costs me far more labor than any other mortal who has been in the habit so long. My taskmaster complains constantly and heavily of my slowness and delay. Part of which is indeed, I confess, owing to indolence. I have probably said before, what is always unhappily true, that I have the most extreme and invariable repugnance to all literary labor of every kind, and almost all mental labor. It is the literal truth, that I never, in the course of the whole year, take the pen, for a paragraph or a letter, *but as an act of force on myself*. When I have a thing of this kind to do, I linger hours and hours often before I can resolutely set about it ; and days and weeks, if it is some task more than ordinary. About finding proper words, and putting them in proper places, I have more difficulty than it could have been supposed possible any one should have, after having had to work among them so long ; but the grand difficulty is a downright scarcity of matter,—plainly the difficulty of finding anything to say. My inventive faculties are exactly like

the powers of a snail; and in addition, my memory is an inconceivably miserable one. This last is a peculiarly grievous circumstance in the business of reviewing books. I read through a volume, and though I write short notices of the matters as I go on, when I get to the end I find I have no manner of hold, in my memory, of the contents. I have to read the greatest part of it again, and some parts probably three or four times. This was the case particularly with one of the last books I have written some account of in the *Eclectic Review*,—a splendid and very interesting volume about *Ancient Wilshire*. . . .

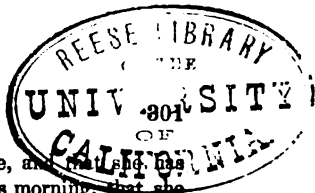
. . . . The article I have referred to in the *Eclectic Review*, will, I should think, be extremely interesting to every curious reader, not from any quality in the writing, but because it contains the substance of the work in question, compressed into a comparatively small space. . . . I did not mean thus to occupy my paper about a book, but really it is one of the most remarkable books I ever read, and the contents have very strongly taken possession of my imagination.

---

#### CIII. TO HIS MOTHER.

*Bourton, October, 1816.*

HONORED MOTHER,—One may wonder that in a world so full of changes, a number of weeks should ever pass away without supplying considerable materials of record and information. In a multitude of instances such materials have not been wanting. How many persons within the last month have had to transmit to their distant relatives or friends melancholy information, sometimes expected, often unexpected. No doubt this very letter, in the course of its conveyance to you, will accompany in the post various letters going to one place and another with the information of the death of parents or children, husbands, wives, or other relatives; and various letters relating accidents, calamities, sicknesses, or distressing experiences of the evils of the times. And then, glancing back to the long series of letters I have sent you during so many years, and imagining how many letters conveying the expressions of distressed persons have so accompanied, during that whole length of time, the letters conveyed from me to you, what cause I have to wonder and be thankful that my letters have so seldom had to convey melancholy accounts or sentiments! what a life of providential indulgence mine has been! A life of health, a life of much favor from fellow-mortals, of never-failing temporal supplies, of innumerable intellectual and religious means and advantages, and nearly nine years of it passed in a happy domestic connection. I think I do not forget any day to be grateful to Heaven for this last circumstance. My dear wife is one of the most estimable, and one of the most affectionate of her sex. I constantly feel how much she deserves to be loved, and I love her as much as in the commencement of our happy union. I often tell her fondly



how grateful I am to the Almighty that she is mine, and that she has been mine so long; only regretting, as I told her this morning, that she had not been mine earlier in life. But that was as Providence ordered it,—the same Providence which ordered that my early partialities should not result in the conjugal relation. From all the merciful care of that providence during the past, I have very good cause to commit my way to the Lord for all the time that may yet be to come. In advancing into the darkness of futurity I will humbly and gratefully trust that the Guardian and Guide of my life hitherto, will “never leave me nor forsake me.” And, the while, I hope to be found more faithful and diligent in his service. . . .

I have not yet got my sermon ready for the printer. The cause of religion is but in rather a languid state. It would be happy if the evils of the times were to work a religious effect, but I fear there are no very strong signs of this. By one means or another, however, religion will most certainly make its promised advances, and bring at last to the wretched human race a most blessed change from the condition they have been in through all ages. . . . One of my friends is just returned from a summer excursion in France and Switzerland, and is going to betake himself with all diligence to the work of preaching. He preaches without any pecuniary reward, and just when and where he thinks he can do most good. Very few things have ever gratified me more than the course this excellent young man has taken. He has grown up perfectly free from all the vanities common among rich young men, has been the better for all the scenes and varieties he has passed through, and dedicates himself to the cause of religion with a most serious, deliberate, and growing determination. It would be a most delightful thing to see a few of what we call gentlemen enter life in anything like such a manner. . . .

---

#### CIV. TO HIS MOTHER.

*Bourton* [date uncertain].

MY DEAR AND HONORED MOTHER,— . . . The divine Providence has continued indulgent to us in this house, our health having been prolonged, and each domestic advantage and blessing. It is my daily wish and prayer to be more thankful, and more willingly and actively obedient. How slow is the perverse mind to yield itself, even to the most powerful attractions of goodness—when it is the goodness of the supreme Being! The greatest of all his acts of goodness is to “give a new heart, and renew a right spirit within us.”

Though nothing unusual has taken place within our walls, a field two or three hundred yards from the house has presented to me a very striking spectacle. In digging for gravel there have been found in different situations, a number of human skeletons. I have seen as many as four of them uncovered. One of them was within a rude structure of stones, placed

somewhat in the form of a coffin. Another seemed to have been in some kind of coffin of wood, as there were several very large iron nails, and an extremely small bit of decayed wood. About the others there were no stones nor relics of wood. They were in each instance complete, there being very little decay, excepting that the bones, of course, were in a state of separation from one another, and that the skulls were too brittle to be taken up perfectly whole. The teeth were in as perfect preservation as when the bodies were deposited. One set was remarkably fine, and being but little worn, indicated that the person was young, though of full growth. In another instance, a considerable number had been lost before the person's death, and the remainder were so much worn down, as to indicate a person of very considerable age. The stature or other dimensions did not appear to be materially different from the present state of the race. There were no coins, weapons, or other circumstances to assist curiosity in the inquiry after the dates of their interment. The most natural conjecture is that they might be Romans, as they were very near the mound of a large Roman camp, as it is judged to be. Other skeletons have at various times been found in these fields. One circumstance with respect to those just now found would seem to indicate that they were the people of pagan times;—they were placed mostly in a direction north and south; whereas the popish Christianity, had it then been in the country, would undoubtedly have prescribed most authoritatively that they should have been laid east and west. It may therefore be fairly conjectured that they have lain quiet and unknown in these beds of dust much more, at any rate, than a thousand years. In those beds, though now in a broken and dislocated state, they are again deposited, excepting some fragments that I and Dr. S—— took away, consisting of several jaws and portions of skulls.

I have been extremely struck and interested by these spectacles, which I was glad to have an opportunity of seeing. They have much more power over the imagination than the bones that may sometimes be seen in opening or digging graves in our churchyards. To the idea of death, and human beings departed, is added, in this case, that of an unknown antiquity, that of the wonderful lengths of time which they have lain unseen and silent under the footsteps of many long generations in succession. The mind is absorbed in musings, inquiries, and wonderings, who they were, what were their language, religion, habits of life, personal appearance; what kind of people they were that inhabited the place around at that time. There is added the solemn idea, which occurs at the sight of any such spectacles of more modern date, that somewhere there exists at this moment, *a soul* that once inhabited this deserted form.

. . . . Here the gloom of approaching winter is coming fast upon us; and judging by the manner in which it affects one in even the vigor of life and health, I can partly imagine how it must affect you. I trust you will find the full effects of the consolations of piety, and the powers of

faith. . . . I earnestly wish and pray that we may all of us be devoted progressively more and more to Him who is our present happiness and our eternal life.

---

CV. TO THE REV. THOMAS LANGDON.

*Bourton, June 18, 1817.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,—You may very justly think it a little strange that your most friendly letter should remain so long unanswered, even though you should at any time have chanced to hear of my bad reputation with respect to correspondence. In the present instance, however, a very few words will make out a tolerable exculpation for me. I am just returned, after nearly a month's absence from home; the latter part of it spent in such uncertain rambling, that your letter could not have been transmitted to me with any confidence of its finding me at any particular place. It therefore remained till my return. I am sorry for this, but will hope it may not cause you any serious inconvenience with regard to the arrangements for that public concern on account of which it was written.

My dear and highly respected old friend will readily believe that the invitation it conveys to me gratifies all those feelings towards him and his domestic companion, and their circle of friends, which have perfectly survived so long an absence, and will survive to the end of life. But my acceptance of it is prevented by a combination of circumstances too insignificant to be recounted in detail, but all together forming an insurmountable obstruction. Some of them relate to very long engagements and tasks, of which I really must acquit myself within a short time to come, or incur much inconvenience and some discredit. I have, besides, an extreme difficulty and reluctance, which but increases with advancing life, to sustain any material part on important public occasions; and in addition, there are a number of deterring feelings and considerations arising from the changes which time and death have made in my native place.

You will have no difficulty in obtaining, nearer home, a better coadjutor in the interesting service you have in expectation. But, indeed, little will be wanting in addition, when you have the exertions of unquestionably the foremost preacher in the world. I am very glad that Hall has consented to be with you. I sincerely wish you every concurring favorable circumstance, and the utmost success in the intended institution.

I am greatly interested by the information concerning yourself and your family, and very grateful for the expressions of friendly regard from you and my dear old friend Mrs. Langdon. It pleases me too, not a little, that *Mary* can entertain what I may call a traditionary kindness for me. How vividly I recall at this moment the luxury of toying with her, and carrying her about the house, when she had been but a short time

an inhabitant of the world in which she has now lived long enough to have her youthful visions of felicity, and long enough to discover, or at least to suspect, that those flattering visions contain no small portion of delusive promise. Yet I hope the great Benefactor intends her as much felicity in this short life as can be imparted by piety, combined with the affection of the relatives and friends with whom she shall spend it. May it be long, and healthy, and useful. The same I wish for the six others that Heaven has spared you of the twelve. How much painful emotion it must have cost to surrender in succession *five* to him that gave them. Yet I am most confident that *now*, in thinking what a world they have left, and to what a world they are gone, both you and their other affectionate parent feel a very, very great preponderance of the consolatory over the mournful feeling.

I should have been glad, my dear friend, to have heard a better account of your health. I earnestly hope a merciful Providence will support you in a capacity of doing good to your family and your congregation for a number of years to come,—I would say for many years yet to come. And I trust we shall all, through whatever term of life yet remains to us, be still more earnestly devoted to Him, into whose presence we hope to go when it shall terminate.

What a length of retrospect it is back to the time that I used to mingle with so much delight in your society, your discussions, and vivacities ! The ideas that arise in the review of that most animated period, and of all the stages since, are far too numerous for any attempt to note a hundredth part of them here. I do promise myself that I shall yet spend some days in the well-remembered scene of those remote years, and, with you and Mrs. L., make our comparisons. . . .

It is now many years since I just saw her and Mary one short moment at the end of a bad sermon I preached at Bristol ; and I was extremely sorry that their appointment to leave Bristol early the following morning, made it impossible for me to have the pleasure of a real interview.

I meant to say a few things about myself, but an intrusion has left me but one moment to the post hour, and I think I ought not to delay the reply so much as one day longer. I have general good health. The physical cause which about ten years since compelled me, most reluctantly, to give up preaching entirely for a considerable time, remains now but in so small a degree that I preach every Sunday, sometimes once, oftener twice, in the most irregular way ; sometimes in the meeting-houses in the district, sometimes in school-rooms and barns.

. . . . I am in a great state of doubt and balancing whether to remove near Bristol ; in which case I should preach oftener at Downend, which I dare say you remember.

I have been happy, very happy in a domestic union nearly ten years. We have three children and have lost two. My wife remembers you, and is ready with her friendly wishes. I should be very glad to hear from you at any time you could spare the space to fill a large sheet with

information respecting yourself, your family, and those old friends, of whom I cannot hope to find that all of them continue in the world. . . .

Yours, most cordially,

J. FOSTER.

CVI. TO B. STOKES, ESQ.

*Bourton, October 31, 1817.*

. . . . As to this book of Alps, torrents, and ices. . . . I should have sent it several days since, but from the very onerous and engrossing business of making up a great number of packages of books for the transit toward Bristol. That business is, within a trifle, completed, a day or two since. They are now all gone, and about arrived at their destination, but two or three dozen of volumes. They have constituted one entire wagon-load, and a material portion of two others. I was myself hardly aware of the quantity which had been brought by degrees into this dark den, till they were thus summoned all out from their obscure lodgments in chests, corners, and dust; whence they have come forth, reproaching me with an expense carried, for a succession of years, beyond all conscionable bounds. . . . But I have told you positively, that I am now going to adopt a decided reform. I *must* of necessity do so, whether I would otherwise choose it or not. The book herewith sent you, forms a fine poetical finish to so extravagant a course; and it is yet to be *paid for*, as it *can*; I question if I dare ever tell you the price.

You will find it a thing that may boldly brave criticism. It seems to me the most exquisite thing of its class that I have ever seen. It is, by its subject, a good match and counterpart to the other which I had the pleasure of lending you—*icy* mountains contrasted with *burning* ones. But you will readily perceive that this is of very considerably more refined and delicate execution than Hamilton's.

With a softness which I have never seen equalled but in the best water-color paintings, it has an admirable distinctness and precision of delineation, insomuch that the small human figures, goats, horses, &c., &c., will bear inspection through a considerably magnifying glass. This is owing, in good part, to the very fine *engraving* which forms the *basis* on which the colors are laid. Its defect is the want of about fifty pages of letter-press description, in French, which accompanied the plates at their publication, but which, from what cause I have no guess, are much oftener wanting than inserted in the copies on the continent—as the bookseller, a man of character, I believe, assures me he knows to be the case. . . . Each plate has the pompous circumstance of a dedication to some high personage or other. This, however, tended to insure their being all executed with great care. One among the latest is inscribed to the unfortunate Louis XVI., in the year 1793, which proves that the work was long in publishing, for the publication commenced soon after



1780. Wolff, the draughtsman of the greatest number of them, was a landscape painter of high reputation, and I have seen the testimony of the very celebrated naturalist and philosopher, Baron Haller, that the drawings were of the highest merit in point of fidelity; and he had observantly traversed the scenes, he says, a number of times. . . .

---

## CVII. TO B. STOKES, ESQ.

*Downend, May 5, 1818.*

MY very worthy friend and brother-in-law, Dr. Cox, is in a state which reduces to these very three months the utmost calculation for his life, in the opinion of his medical friends; and I should feel a long absence and excursion of amusement, just at such a season, incompatible with the interest and attention justly claimed by such a situation, to say nothing of the many obligations I owe to his kindness. The progress of his decline to his present condition has been through constantly aggravating, and recently quite dreadful, suffering, from some malady still very uncertain to medical judgment, but probably the heart or its immediate vicinity. He has intervals of alleviation, but the grand cause is still working on, and the only uncertainty of anticipation is judged to lie between a speedy and sudden termination, and a protraction of extreme and frequently recurring sufferings through a space of several months.

. . . . The fine book was delivered safe, and is now in its appropriate box in this garret. It does not, on re-inspection, appear of diminished excellence from my having seen many fine things in the interval of its absence, nor as compared with one or two most admirable and splendid things which have also found their way into this garret, and were never inhabitants of that other spider's palace which I left six months since.

. . . . But I have gone on beyond any fair proportion of talk about myself. I am also at the end of my time, as it will be desirable to get a place in Broadmead Meeting this evening *an hour* before the time for the commencement of the service. I have seen a good deal of this intellectual giant.\* His health is better than some time past. His mind seems of an order fit with respect to its intellectual powers to go directly among a superior rank of intelligences in some other world, with very little requisite addition of force.

\* HALL.

THE  
LIFE AND CORRESPONDENCE

OF

JOHN FOSTER:

EDITED BY

J. E. RYLAND.

WITH NOTICES OF MR. FOSTER AS A PREACHER AND A COMPANION,

BY JOHN SHEPPARD,

AUTHOR OF "THOUGHTS ON DEVOTION," ETC., ETC.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

NEW YORK:  
WILEY & PUTNAM, 161 BROADWAY.

---

1846.



# CONTENTS.

## CHAPTER VI.

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | PAGE |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| Second residence at Downend—Relinquishment of the Pastoral office—Bible Society Meeting—Missionary Discourse—Essay on Popular Ignorance—Excursion to Devon and Cornwall—Removal to Stapleton—Lectures—Essay to Doddridge's Rise and Progress of Religion—His Son's Illness and Death—(1817—1826) | 1—15 |

## LETTERS.

|                                                                                            |    |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| 109. To the Rev. Joseph Hughes—Howe's Works—Works of Graphical Art                         | 16 |
| 109. To John Sheppard, Esq. Relating to a manuscript on war                                | 18 |
| 110. To John Sheppard, Esq. On the decease of Mrs. Sheppard                                | 19 |
| 111. To John Easthope, Esq. Essay on Popular Ignorance                                     | 20 |
| 112. To the Rev. Joseph Hughes. Second edition of the Essay on Popular Ignorance           | 21 |
| 113. To the Rev. Joseph Hughes. Missionary discourse, 2d edition                           | 23 |
| 114. To the Rev. John Fawcett. On the uselessness of monuments                             | 28 |
| 115. To John Sheppard, Esq.                                                                | 29 |
| 116. To the Rev. John Fawcett. Changes of residence—Monuments in Westminster Abbey         | 30 |
| 117. To the Rev. Josiah Hill                                                               | 32 |
| 118. To B. Stokes, Esq. New edition of the Essays                                          | 33 |
| 119. To B. Stokes, Esq. Visit to Haverford West                                            | 34 |
| 120. To Joseph Cottle, Esq.                                                                | 35 |
| 121. To the Rev. Josiah Hill                                                               | 36 |
| 122. To the Rev. Josiah Hill. On Mathematical and Classical Studies                        | 37 |
| 123. To Mr. J. W. Hill                                                                     | 38 |
| 124. To the Rev. Josiah Hill                                                               | 40 |
| 125. To the Rev. Josiah Hill                                                               | 41 |
| 126. To the Rev. Josiah Hill. Baxter's Life                                                | 41 |
| 127. To the Editor. On a translation of Pascal's Thoughts                                  | 42 |
| 128. To the Rev. Josiah Hill. Miss Saunders—Parliamentary debate—Plunkett—Tierney—Brougham | 42 |
| 129. To the Editor                                                                         | 43 |
| 130. To the Rev. Josiah Hill. Literary labor—Arminian tenet of sufficient grace            | 44 |
| 131. To the Rev. Josiah Hill. Dr. Ryland's death and funeral                               | 45 |

|                                                                                                     | PAGE |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| 132. To the Editor. On book-collecting, &c. . . . .                                                 | 46   |
| 133. To B. Stokes, Esq. Failure of Welsh banks . . . . .                                            | 47   |
| 134. To the Rev. Josiah Hill. Illness of Mr. James Hill . . . . .                                   | 48   |
| 135. To the Rev. Josiah Hill. Essay on Doddridge's Rise and Progress<br>—Hall's preaching . . . . . | 49   |
| 136. To the Rev. Josiah Hill. Death of Mr. James Hill . . . . .                                     | 51   |
| 137. To the Rev. W. Anderson . . . . .                                                              | 53   |
| 138. To his Son . . . . .                                                                           | 54   |
| 139. To the Rev. Josiah Hill. Consolation on the decease of the<br>young . . . . .                  | 57   |
| 140. To John Bullar, Esq. . . . .                                                                   | 59   |
| 141. To John Bullar, Esq. Last illness and death of his Son . . . . .                               | 60   |
| 142. To Mrs. Saunders. On the same event . . . . .                                                  | 63   |

## CHAPTER VII.

|                                                                                                                                                        |       |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| The Serampore Controversy—Mr. Hall's Settlement in Bristol—Dis-<br>senters' Ordination—Catholic Emancipation—The Reform Bill<br>—(1827—1832) . . . . . | 66—82 |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|

## LETTERS.

|                                                                                                            |     |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 143. To J. B. Williams, Esq. The Life of Philip Henry . . . . .                                            | 82  |
| 144. To John Easthope, Esq., M.P.—Canning—Catholic Emancipa-<br>tion . . . . .                             | 83  |
| 145. To the Rev. Josiah Hill . . . . .                                                                     | 86  |
| 146. To John Purser, sen., Esq. . . . .                                                                    | 86  |
| 147. To the Rev. Josiah Hill. Reflections on his Son's death . . . . .                                     | 88  |
| 148. To Benjamin Stokes, Esq. Instance of sudden death—Dr. Marsh-<br>man . . . . .                         | 89  |
| 149. To the Rev. Josiah Hill . . . . .                                                                     | 91  |
| 150. To the Rev. Josiah Hill . . . . .                                                                     | 92  |
| 151. To John Purser, jun., Esq. Domestic changes—The Serampore<br>missionaries . . . . .                   | 93  |
| 152. To the Rev. Josiah Hill . . . . .                                                                     | 96  |
| 153. To the Rev. Josiah Hill. On the death of Mrs. Hill . . . . .                                          | 97  |
| 154. To the Rev. Josiah Hill. On the same . . . . .                                                        | 98  |
| 155. To John Easthope, Esq. Catholic Emancipation . . . . .                                                | 100 |
| 156. To the Rev. Josiah Hill . . . . .                                                                     | 101 |
| 157. To B. Stokes, Esq. Serampore . . . . .                                                                | 101 |
| 158. To B. Stokes, Esq. Reasons for declining to preach at Worcester . . . . .                             | 102 |
| 159. To John Purser, jun., Esq. On Dr. Marshman—Duke of Wel-<br>lington's policy towards Ireland . . . . . | 103 |
| 160. To Joseph Cottle, Esq.—On the Established Church and Dissent . . . . .                                | 107 |
| 161. To Dr. Stenson . . . . .                                                                              | 117 |
| 162. To the Rev. John Fawcett . . . . .                                                                    | 118 |
| 163. To B. Stokes, Esq. Death of Dr. Okely—Dr. Chalmers's visit to<br>Bristol . . . . .                    | 120 |

|                                                                                            | PAGE |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| 164. To J. Purser, Esq. Death of Mr. Purser, sen.—State of Ireland<br>—O'Connell . . . . . | 122  |
| 165. To the Rev. Josiah Hill . . . . .                                                     | 124  |
| 166. To the Rev. John Fawcett . . . . .                                                    | 125  |
| 167. To J. Purser, Esq. . . . .                                                            | 126  |
| 168. To Dr. Stenson . . . . .                                                              | 127  |
| 169. To the Rev. Josiah Hill . . . . .                                                     | 127  |

## CHAPTER VIII.

|                                                                                                                                                                                    |     |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Illness and death of Mrs. Foster—Mr. Anderson—Journey to Wales<br>—Mr. Hughes—Rammohunroy—Letters on the Church—On the<br>Ballot—Eclectic Review—Mr. Fawcett (1832—1838) . . . . . | 129 |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|

## LETTERS.

|                                                                                                             |     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 170. To the Rev. Thomas Coles—Mrs. Foster's funeral . . . . .                                               | 146 |
| 171. To the Rev. Josiah Hill. Coincidence in their domestic trials . . . . .                                | 147 |
| 172. To the Rev. John Fawcett. Character of Mrs. Foster . . . . .                                           | 148 |
| 173. To the Rev. Josiah Hill. Reflections on Mrs. Foster's decease . . . . .                                | 149 |
| 174. To Sir J. Easthope, Bart. Ireland church reform—Religious ad-<br>monitions . . . . .                   | 150 |
| 175. To the Rev. Josiah Hill. On religious assurance as held by the<br>Methodists . . . . .                 | 153 |
| 176. To the Rev. Josiah Hill. Brucker's <i>Historia Philosophia</i> —Hades . . . . .                        | 153 |
| 177. To Mrs. Anderson. On Mr. Anderson's death . . . . .                                                    | 155 |
| 178. To the Rev. Joseph Hughes. A farewell letter, written shortly<br>before Mr. H.'s death . . . . .       | 155 |
| 179. To the Rev. Dr. Carpenter. On the opinions of the Rajah Rum-<br>mohunroy . . . . .                     | 157 |
| 180. To Miss Sheppard (Northampton) . . . . .                                                               | 159 |
| 181. To John Sheppard, Esq. On Poetry—The intermediate state . . . . .                                      | 160 |
| 182. To the Rev. Dr. Leifchild—Character of Mr. Hughes . . . . .                                            | 161 |
| 183. To the Editor of the Morning Chronicle—The Established Church<br>and the Voluntary Principle . . . . . | 163 |
| 184. To the Editor of the Morning Chronicle—The Evangelical Clergy . . . . .                                | 169 |
| 185. To the Rev. Thomas Coles, on the death of his daughter . . . . .                                       | 175 |
| 186. To the Rev. John Fawcett . . . . .                                                                     | 176 |
| 187. To the Editor of the Morning Chronicle—The Ballot, No. 1. . . . .                                      | 178 |
| 188. To the Editor of the Morning Chronicle—The Ballot, No. 2. . . . .                                      | 182 |
| 189. To the Editor of the Morning Chronicle—The Ballot, No. 3. . . . .                                      | 187 |
| 190. To Mrs. Hannah More . . . . .                                                                          | 191 |
| 191. To the Rev. Josiah Hill—Politics—The Watchman . . . . .                                                | 192 |
| 192. To H. Horsfall, Esq. . . . .                                                                           | 193 |
| 193. To John Easthope, Esq. The Morning Chronicle—Popery . . . . .                                          | 194 |
| 194. To B. Stokes, Esq. . . . .                                                                             | 196 |
| 195. To John Easthope, Esq. . . . .                                                                         | 196 |
| 196. To the Rev. Josiah Hill. On Book-collecting . . . . .                                                  | 197 |
| 197. To the Rev. Josiah Hill . . . . .                                                                      | 198 |

|                                                                                                     | PAGE |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| 198. To John Purser, Esq. . . . .                                                                   | 199  |
| 199. To Mrs. Stokes . . . . .                                                                       | 201  |
| 200. To J. Wade, Esq.—Universal Suffrage . . . . .                                                  | 202  |
| 201. To the Rev. Josiah Hill . . . . .                                                              | 202  |
| 202. To the Rev. Josiah Hill. On the duty of Christians in reference<br>to public affairs . . . . . | 203  |
| 203. To J. Purser, jun., Esq. . . . .                                                               | 204  |
| 204. To the Rev. John Fawcett . . . . .                                                             | 206  |
| 205. To B. Stokes, Esq. . . . .                                                                     | 208  |
| 206. To the Rev. Josiah Hill . . . . .                                                              | 209  |
| 207. To B. Stokes, Esq. . . . .                                                                     | 210  |
| 208. To James Fawcett, Esq., on the death of the Rev. John Fawcett . . . . .                        | 210  |
| 209. To the Rev. Dr. Price, on Judge Durfee's Poem " <i>What Cheer?</i> " . . . . .                 | 212  |
| 210. To the Rev. Thomas Coles . . . . .                                                             | 212  |
| 211. To Dr. Stenson—Michelet's Life of Luther . . . . .                                             | 213  |

## CHAPTER IX.

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |            |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| <b>Last Review—Letter to Mr. Greaves—Visit to Bourton in 1840—<br/>Death of Mr. Coles—Visit to London in 1841—Illness—Last<br/>Visit to Bourton in 1842—The Chartists and the Anti-Corn-Law<br/>League—National Education—Last Illness and Death (1839—<br/>1843 . . . . .</b> | <b>215</b> |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|

## LETTERS.

|                                                                                                                                 |     |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 212. To Mrs. Stokes—On the Death of Mr. Stokes . . . . .                                                                        | 233 |
| 213. To the Rev. F. Clowes—On the intermediate State . . . . .                                                                  | 236 |
| 214. To the Rev. Thomas Coles—On his Son's death . . . . .                                                                      | 243 |
| 215. To the Rev. Josiah Hill—National Education—Ireland . . . . .                                                               | 244 |
| 216. To J. Purser, Esq.—O'Connell—Oxford Tracts . . . . .                                                                       | 247 |
| 217. To Sir C. E. Smith, Bart.—On the Established Church and Dis-<br>senters . . . . .                                          | 248 |
| 218. To Sir C. E. Smith, Bart.—The Nonintrusionists in Scotland—<br>Dr. Arnold's Letters—the Reform Bill—Church Rates . . . . . | 250 |
| 219. To James Fawcett, Esq.—On the character of the late Dr. Faw-<br>cett . . . . .                                             | 252 |
| 220. To the Rev. Josiah Hill . . . . .                                                                                          | 255 |
| 221. To the Rev. B. S. Hall . . . . .                                                                                           | 255 |
| 222. To the Rev. W. Peechy—On the Millennium . . . . .                                                                          | 256 |
| 223. To John Purser, Esq. . . . .                                                                                               | 258 |
| 224. To Mrs. Stokes . . . . .                                                                                                   | 260 |
| 225. To the Editor . . . . .                                                                                                    | 261 |
| 226. To a young Minister. On the Duration of Future Punishments . . . . .                                                       | 262 |
| 227. To the Rev. Robert Ainslie. On Socialist publications. . . . .                                                             | 270 |
| 228. To Joseph Cottle, Esq. . . . .                                                                                             | 272 |
| 229. To the Rev. T. Grinfield, M.A. Woollett's engravings . . . . .                                                             | 273 |
| 230. To John Purser, Esq. . . . .                                                                                               | 274 |
| 231. To the Rev. Josiah Hill. On the Death of Mr. Wade . . . . .                                                                | 275 |

|                                                                                                                                                                            | PAGE |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| 232. To the Rev. Dr. Harris—Observations on his “Great Commission”—On the progress of Christianity and missionary undertakings . . . . .                                   | 276  |
| 233. To Mr. John Foster . . . . .                                                                                                                                          | 292  |
| 234. To the Rev. Thomas Grinfield, M.A. Dissensions in the Established Church—Defective attention to Christian morals in the preaching of the Evangelical clergy . . . . . | 292  |
| 235. To the Rev. Josiah Hill . . . . .                                                                                                                                     | 294  |
| 236. To W. L. R. Cates, Esq. . . . .                                                                                                                                       | 295  |
| 237. To the Rev. Josiah Hill—State of the Nation—Anti-Corn-Law League . . . . .                                                                                            | 296  |
| 238. To Mrs. Holbrooke . . . . .                                                                                                                                           | 297  |
| 239. To the Rev. Josiah Hill—Agitation . . . . .                                                                                                                           | 299  |
| 240. To the Rev. Josiah Hill—Petition from the Methodists in behalf of the Scotch Church . . . . .                                                                         | 300  |
| 241. To Joseph Cottle, Esq. . . . .                                                                                                                                        | 301  |
| 242. To the Rev. Josiah Hill. Wilberforce’s “Practical View”—Disturbances in Wales . . . . .                                                                               | 301  |
| 243. To Sir J. Easthope, Bart., M.P. . . . .                                                                                                                               | 302  |
| 244. To Sir J. Easthope, Bart., M.P. (Mr. Foster’s last letter; written ten days before his death) . . . . .                                                               | 303  |

## CHAPTER X.

|                                                                                     |     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Miscellaneous Observations on Mr. Foster’s character . . . . .                      | 304 |
| Notices of Mr. Foster as a Preacher and a Companion, by John Sheppard, Esq. . . . . | 315 |
| Nine Letters to Miss Saunders, with a Memoir . . . . .                              | 339 |
| Advertisement to Joseph Cottle, Esq. . . . .                                        | 341 |
| Memoir . . . . .                                                                    | 343 |
| Letters . . . . .                                                                   | 351 |
| List of Mr. Foster’s Contributions to the Eclectic Review . . . . .                 | 380 |





# MEMOIR.

---

## CHAPTER VI.

SECOND RESIDENCE AT DOWNEND—RELINQUISHMENT OF THE PASTORAL OFFICE—BIBLE SOCIETY MEETING—MISSIONARY DISCOURSE—ESSAY ON POPULAR IGNORANCE—EXCURSION TO DEVON AND CORNWALL—REMOVAL TO STAPLETON—LECTURES—ESSAY TO DODDRIDGE'S RISE AND PROGRESS OF RELIGION—HIS SON'S ILLNESS AND DEATH.

1817—1826.

MR. FOSTER'S long practice in village preaching, and habitual endeavor to accommodate his diction and mode of illustration to unlettered congregations, might reasonably have led him to hope, that in the scene of his former labors, he would not be wholly unsuccessful; yet scarcely six months had elapsed when the failure of his efforts was so evident, that he could not hesitate on the propriety of relinquishing the situation. Several of his more intelligent and serious hearers of the class whose benefit he had chiefly labored to promote, were withdrawn either by death or a change of residence; others ceased to attend, from a preference for a style of preaching more adapted to operate on the feelings than to promote a thoughtful piety; and of those whom habit brought weekly to their usual seats, several showed an utter listlessness more depressing than their absence, which would have at least allowed the charitable hope, that they were deriving some benefit elsewhere. In communicating his determination to resign in a letter to Dr. Bompas, he remarks, "It will be recollected I was very far from sanguine in commencing it, but I really did not anticipate quite so complete a failure; I *did* fancy it possible, that a natural manner of speaking, that illustrations and pointed applications, tending to preclude the too usual dulness and formality of religious discourse, and that a language generally clear of hard or fine words, might perhaps engage in some considerable

degree the attention of even uncultivated minds ; and indeed I think I have hardly preached in any other place where they did not engage it somewhat more than they have done here. . . . It cannot be honestly denied, that by the application of a great deal of time and effort, a more obvious and attractive mode of exhibiting religious subjects would be attainable (that is as a *habitual* strain, for *some* of my sermons I should perhaps consider as in this respect nearly as much adapted as I could well make them), but I cannot feel the duty of making a laborious effort to change my manner for the sake of attracting persons, to whom, after all, it would be less attractive than the very crudest exhibitions at the Methodist meeting—persons who are no longer in the way for being attracted, and who will, for the most part, never come again in the way ;—I cannot feel the duty, unless it were impossible for me to be in any place to which I should be more adapted, and unless I felt it a compulsory duty at all events to preach. . . . On a deliberate view of the whole case, then, I am impelled to the practical conclusion, I have expressed above, that I must retire from the service within some short time. I am sure you and my other estimable friends will believe me when I say, that so far as my high and grateful regard for them is concerned, I shall execute the determination with very great regret. For a small circle of such friends, and such partial auditors, I cannot look elsewhere. Their value and their kindness will make me willing to protract a few months longer a service which I should otherwise feel the propriety of declining immediately.

“ As yet I have no plan with respect to ulterior public employment. That must be left to Providence, and the course of time. In one way and place or another, I will hope to be made of some use to the best cause.”

It was about this time that he was invited to take a part in the anniversary of a Bible Society meeting at Kingswood. In his reply, he explained to the respected individual by whom the request was conveyed, the physical debility which of itself would form a valid reason for declining the service, and then added, “ After a clear exemption made out on a personal ground, it may seem almost impertinent to make any remark on the general subject. And I shall allow myself but very few words in the way of suggesting, that according to the feeling of the great majority of the persons attending these meetings, there are too many speakers, instead of a scarcity of them, and a far too protracted in-

dulgence in making speeches. My own opinion, or taste, in the matter, may perhaps partake of perversity or whim, but I will acknowledge, I utterly loathe and abominate the prevailing spirit and manner of these meetings. From all I have seen of them, they appear to me to be, in a greater degree than they are anything else, exhibitions of vanity, cajolery, and ostentation. The ludicrous aping of the forms and ceremonial of the chief legislative assemblies,—the rattling and clapping,—the sort of prize-speech making, in which it is often so palpably evident that the speaker's object is just to *shine*,—the fulsome dealing round of extravagant compliment,—all these give, to say the least, a farcical and operatic cast to the whole concern (in many instances, at least, I have felt this the irresistible impression), and form, in my apprehension, a flagrant abandonment of dignity, sense, and honest truth. That money is obtained, and the popularity of the good cause promoted, every good man must rejoice ; but he must lament the necessity, if it *be* such, that so much of the agency for doing this good should consist in men's helping to inflate one another's vanity, and turning important matters into parading show and exhibition.”\*

The correspondence in the preceding volume contains intimations of Mr. Foster's wishes to be disengaged from the labors of periodical criticism, and to devote himself to the preparation of works of permanent and independent interest. Whether he would have overcome the aversion to the mental toil involved in authorship (an aversion, reiterated so often in his letters), without some extraneous inducement, may be fairly doubted. The two productions, which, after so long an interval, followed the Essays, were both in consequence of his being solicited to advocate from the pulpit two public institutions. His discourse on Missions was delivered in September, 1818 ; and his sermon on behalf of the British and Foreign School Society (which he enlarged into his Essay on the Evils of Popular Ignorance), in the following December. The latter work was published in 1820. In writing to Mr. Hughes, while it was passing through the press, he says, “ Thus far I have found more than half the original sentences either actually faulty, or at least admitting of what I thought improvement. The first composition was most tediously slow, and there is many a page, as it now stands, which has cost still more time and labor in the revisal than in the first writing. On the

\* To the Rev. Michael Maurice, May 20, 1818.

whole, these last six months about, have been a season of very great labor, and therefore very resolute self-denial,—no one can imagine how much both of one and the other. If in respect to the matter of emolument, it is as poorly repaid *as in the case of last year's 'Discourse,'* which was also a thing of very great labor, I must even have recourse to the old principle of 'virtue its own reward;' for never was labor, in the lucrative respect, worse remunerated. It is a far easier thing, I warrant, to assume a cajoling tone, and—'Why don't you write?'—'We should be glad to see you far oftener in print;'—'How can you satisfy your conscience not to do more for the public good?'—and stuff like this—a far easier thing than to let go a few shillings when one *has* done something of the kind referred to. Yet many a person has believed himself administering the sweetest spoonfuls to my vanity by palavering me in this hypocritical strain. I have had a great deal too much politeness to answer, 'Did you *purchase* what I printed some time since?' I have really let them go off with the double gratification of believing they bubbled *me*, and knowing they saved *their money*.

"The expression, 'if you have succeeded,' in your letter, leads me to observe, that I certainly *have* succeeded in the main and substantial thing proposed, and professed in the title (of this thing in the press). I have given a broad, true, and strongly delineated picture of the intellectual and moral state of the mass of our people. It was *matter of fact*, and only required the power of placing in a strong light, and in proper order, what had come, and is at any time coming, within one's own observation. No doubt, I have also been in the habit of catechizing other observers, some of them much more familiar, I confess, than myself, with the classes in question. I am quite sensible there is no great share of what would be called brilliance in this production,—I perhaps persuade myself that the subject was most unfavorable for much of that kind, but I am rather confident there is much force and truth of representation. And I shall have and *retain* a higher respect for my own than for the reader's judgment, if he does not think the *style* better than that of most of my contemporaries. It has one quality which I must probably be content to perceive, or at least to approve, myself; for I do not expect any critic or reader to take due cognizance of it—namely, that the language is simply and absolutely formed for the thought,—is adapted and flexible to it,—is taken out of the whole mass of the vocabulary of our tongue

just on purpose for the thoughts, and moulded, if I may so speak, to their very shape, with an almost perfect independence and avoidance of all the set, artificial forms of expression,—and yet it is not wild and wanton, but merely natural and free. But my saying this recalls to my remembrance, that an Edinburgh critic (in the Edinburgh Monthly Review) *did* seem to have a kind of clumsy apprehension (in the ‘Discourse,’) of the quality which I have chosen to describe as a merit in style; and he had the good taste to take it for a fault, and identified it, if I recollect, with the lawless dashing and affectation of modern would-be-fine writing. But all this is exceedingly foreign to the monitory topics of your letter.

“You are afraid that the production cannot have escaped some of the defilement of *radicalism*. I may assure you that in *one* way it is as clear of any such thing as if it had been written by yourself, or Hall, or Cunningham, or my good old friend Zach. Macauley. It is, I suppose, a *sine quâ non* of radicalism (how eagerly, for change, this foolish term has been seized upon—*Jacobinism* being quite worn out in thirty years’ service), an essential, is it not? that there should be a systematic lauding and extolling of *the people*, a trumpeting of their virtues, wisdom, rights, &c., &c.; whereas, from beginning to end, *I* exhibit the People as odiously and loathsomely vile, and degraded, and depraved; insomuch, that, while intending it, and knowing it for mere truth, I have yet been sometimes apprehensive of incurring the imputation of having some special spite at the people, some actual revenge, to be wreaked on them in a book, for want of such means of infliction as the Manchester parsons employed, and the Clapham and Battersea parsons approve their having employed—as how should they do otherwise than approve, for Vansittart is of the Bible Society, and I think even Castlereagh has speechified for it, and *they* approved that mode of disciplining the people.

“I exhibit the people as debased, vicious, and abominable; but why have they been *suffered* to be so, in this hideous degree? Where has been the grand cause and the wickedness of their being allowed to continue in vile and wretched barbarism from generation to generation? It may be of the nature of radicalism (for it is not yet settled how much that vice comprehends), that in *this* reference, recurring several times at intervals, I have uttered divers sentences of indignant invective. And how, I wonder, was this to be avoided? In a brief review of the state of the people,

in this powerful, *enlightened*, *Protestant* country, the mass of the people are seen, in frightful sameness, from one age to another, sunk in the most barbarous ignorance, with its appropriate depravities. Now, was this to be represented as a bare fact, as if it had been a series of unfavorable seasons, as a thing for which there was nowhere any accountableness, a thing which there were no means and no duty of causing to be otherwise? Was the reader to be left to lament, in his simplicity, that there had not, during so many ages, been a strong government in the land, that there had not been a religious establishment, great seminaries of learning, great revenues applicable to the national welfare, a great power of influence of the upper classes (not solely the government) over the lower? No, simple reader, you are to know that there *were* all these fine things, that these things have been to this hour; but that they have been so much better occupied than about the improvement of the people, that said people have been suffered to continue a moral nuisance on the face of the earth; and yet, all the while, there has been a furious rant about the glory of England. It obstinately *will* appear to me, that it were infinitely silly for a writer, who is taking a view of the melancholy and horrid fact of the past and present intellectual and moral state of the people, to fancy himself required, by some kind of delicacy or homage to the pride and self-complacency of church-folk, and perhaps great folk, to keep out of sight (even if it were possible) so large and essential a part of his subject, as *the grand cause why the dreadful state of things which he exhibits has been what it has*. If he were just only making, to a mixed assembly of persons, an appeal for local charity, it would be quite a different affair; he would then have to consult the *policy* of the moment. But this winter's job of mine has been a quite different sort of thing; an attempt to display, in a brief, but somewhat comprehensive manner, in the spirit of a moral censor, combined with something of the office of a historian, a mighty evil, *in its existence as a fact, and in its relations of cause and consequence*. Now, unless we are forbidden to take such a subject, such a grand matter of fact, that is to say, at last, are forbidden to take *any* subject otherwise than as clipped down to the part of it which you may exhibit and displease nobody,—unless it is wrong to take such a subject on this large ground, it is plainly impossible for you to withhold the most emphatically condemnatory references to *that* in the nation, which might and should have *prevented* its being in

so horrid a condition ;—to that economy of government and church of which it was *the sole and express business* to see to the nation's welfare and improvement, together with that great power of influence, by which the higher ranks (considered *not* in an *official* capacity) might have mightily promoted that improvement.

“ ‘Generalize yourself,’ say you? Why, my good friend, the very mirror and perfection as you are, of what the Clapham high-church-and-state junto would wish a dissenter and reformist to be, you would have tight work to *generalize* on the brutal ignorance and barbarism of a parish, for a hundred years running, without a single glance at the *ecclesiastical institution* established in that parish, and richly fed with its tithes, for the very purpose of taking care of the souls of the people. For myself, I have no such petty concern as to be on good terms with that or any other junto; my business I took to be, to state the fact and the truth, comprehensively and strongly, whomever it might displease or please.

“ Yet as to this pleasing and displeasing, you really seem, from so much intercourse and favor with a particular class—the evangelical church-people, the grossest sycophants of power, and defenders of the whole vast system of corruption—to have come to identify *them* with everything of which the opinion is worth regarding in the land. But do you, indeed, make nothing of all that mental excitement, that augmenting stream of opinion and detestation, and that gradual course of events, which are driving with destructive direction, against that state of things which these devotees to everything established are so fervently worshipping? Do you really, as I suppose *they* do, think that after a while all this will be quelled and sink into the earth or go off in vapor into the air; to leave, in tranquil permanence, just the order of things which Wilberforce, Vansittart, . . . and the like, make it a good part of their religion to defend? I ask this simply in reference to the point of *policy*, in a writer's making no scruple of showing himself the enemy of that system, when he is on topics which *cannot* be treated comprehensively without *some* kind of reference to the manner in which the presiding power and institutions of the country have affected the matters in question.

“ You remonstrate against ‘*confusing and revolting peculiarities.*’ *Peculiarities*? that should imply something in which a man has very few to partake or coincide with him. Think of this! as applied to my opinion, relatively, for instance, to the effect which



the Established Church has had on the knowledge and religion of the mass of the English people for several ages back ! or, to my estimate and remarks, as to what one-tenth part of the several thousands of millions sterling which the state has expended in *war*, during the past century, would have done, if applied to the direct improvement of the people ! Revolting peculiarities ! What company can you have been keeping ?”

In the autumn of 1819, Foster spent several weeks in an excursion to the most remarkable points of the Devonshire and Cornwall coast. In a letter written to Mr. Hughes, on his way home (dated Ilfracombe, Sept. 21, 1819), he says, “ A very loud internal admonition urges my return to the dreaded business of mental and literary task-work. I shall be very glad, however, to have made this long excursion, through scenes which I had very often greatly wished to see, and with no immediate hope ; much less could I have any anticipation, that a person whom I had never seen nor heard of, a few months previously, should make me the liberal offer of taking a circuit of five or six hundred miles, entirely at his expense. The offer was made in so perfectly easy and unostentatious a manner, and the course of the tour was so perfectly the thing that I had long wished, that I had not a moment’s hesitation, provided my good wife’s health would allow my going so far and long from home. The luxury has been very great, of beholding so many scenes of land and sea, and rocks, castles, and other antiquities, under the advantage of constantly favorable weather, good health, and providential protection against all disastrous and even incommodious incidents. If I live to do something more in the way of attempting to instruct the public, I have no doubt this series of beautiful and magnificent visions will contribute now and then something in the way of useful ornament or illustration.”

The Essay on the Evils of Popular Ignorance was published in 1820, and in the autumn, Mr. Foster began to revise it for a second edition, a task which occupied him for several months. “ You will envy the felicities of quill driving,” he says, in a letter to Mr. Stokes (March 15, 1821), “ when I confess to you, that ever since before I wrote to you, perhaps about the end of October, I have literally been at the very job which I then mentioned I had begun, and which is at this very hour several weeks short of its termination. I have actually been at it without intermission, or leisure to read a newspaper, review or anything else.

And I am quite certain I never underwent the same quantity of hard labor within the same number of weeks together in my whole life. On entering thoroughly into the job, with a determination to work it so that I should *never* have any more trouble about it, I found it such a business as I had little reckoned upon. My principle of proceeding was to treat no page, sentence, or word, with the smallest ceremony; but to hack, split, twist, prune, pull up by the roots, or practise any other severity on whatever I did not like. The consequence has been alterations to the amount very likely of several thousands. There is no essential change, however, on a large scale; the series of thoughts is the same, but with innumerable modifications of adjustment and expression; and with so many small and, here and there, considerable enlargements, that the Essay on Popular Ignorance has distended itself under the process, and notwithstanding many condensations, from three hundred to four hundred pages. The printing of this is nearly completed; the introductory part of the Missionary Discourse has undergone a similar handling; but the printer having lately, at my remonstrance, very much accelerated his part of the business, I shall be obliged to pass, with very slight operations, over more than the latter half of the said discourse. I must let it take its fortune, on the strength of the rigorous discipline given to all the preceding portion of the volume. It is a sweet luxury, this book-making; for I dare say I could point out scores of sentences *each* one of which has cost me *several hours* of the utmost exertion of my mind to put it in the state in which it now stands, after putting it in several other forms, to each one of which I saw some precise objection, which I could, at the time, have very distinctly assigned. And in truth, there are hundreds of them to which I could make objections as they *now* stand, but I did not know how to hammer them into a better form."

At Michaelmas, 1821, Foster removed from Downend to Stapleton, within three miles of Bristol. To a residence in the city itself he had a most decided dislike, partly on the score of health, and partly from dread of idle morning visitors.

In the following year (1822), he complied with the solicitations of his friends in Bristol, to deliver a lecture once a fortnight at Broadmead Chapel. It was so arranged as to interfere as little as possible with the services in other places of worship, by which means an audience was formed, which, though not numerous,

contained probably a greater proportion of intelligent and educated persons than most single congregations could have furnished. The preacher was aware, that he was addressing friends, or persons who, from their knowledge of him as an author, felt no ordinary interest in listening to his instructions. He acceded to undertake this service perhaps with greater readiness from having previously formed the intention of publishing a volume of Discourses. "If I can bring myself," he says to Mr. Hughes (April 27, 1821), "some time hence to the business of writing once more, I think the next attempt must be, a volume of Discourses, or Sermons turned Essays, in default of my having done anything of consequence for so long a time in the pulpit." To another friend he says,\* "At the beginning of the year I was requested by a sort of association of friends in the city to undertake a lecture (that is to say, a sermon) once a fortnight to a congregation quite miscellaneous, and in the most perfect sense of the word, *voluntary*. This was much the kind of thing that I could have wished, under my physical incompetence to the usual frequency of what is called *stated* service—together with my indisposition and consciously deficient adaptedness to it. As to the *studious* part of the concern, however, this one discourse a fortnight cost me as much labor perhaps as it is usual to bestow on the five or six sermons exacted in the fortnight of a preacher's life. If I shall have competent health for the required labor of composition, I may probably try to put a selection of these discourses into the shape of a printed volume or more, in the course of time." A few months later, he repeats his intention of publishing, but adds, "It will be most slow and oppressive toil."†

At the end of two years, Mr. Foster found that his state of health would only allow of his delivering a monthly lecture. "I had fully made up my mind," he informs Mr. Hill, "to an entire discontinuance of that service. But after having signified so, I had one evening a 'deputed' party of the Bristol friends here, to persuade me to the contrary; to persuade, as the first object, a continuance as before, once a fortnight; and failing of that, in the next place, to continue the service at least once a month; to which latter appointment I was not able to refuse acceding. And therefore, for this year, so it is to be. You ask whether 'the end was better than the beginning.' If simply the last discourse be the point of the question, I think I may answer in the affirma-

\* July 3, 1822.

† To Mr. Hill, Nov., 1822.

tive. I had a splendid subject—the three *Methodists* of Babylon in the ‘fiery furnace;’ and perhaps I thought, and *perhaps* some of the auditors thought, that I did it tolerable justice. This was no appropriate Christmas subject; but I began by briefly ‘showing cause’ why no special regard was due to the day.”\* On Mr. Hall’s settling in Bristol he at once relinquished this engagement. “I have made an end of lecturing,” he tells Mr. Stokes; “it had been, from the first movement of the question of Hall’s coming, my determination to do so, in that event; such a service appearing to me altogether superfluous, and even bordering on impertinent. I shall now have very little preaching ever, probably, any more; and shall apply myself, as well as I can, to the mode of intellectual operation, of which the results may extend much further and last much longer.”†

Mr. Foster’s pen, however, even before the termination of the Lectures, had not been wholly unemployed for the public. Not to mention his contributions to the *Eclectic Review*, it was during this period that he wrote a theological essay which, in point of direct religious utility, has been surpassed by none of his writings—his *Introduction to Doddridge’s Rise and Progress of Religion*. “Between two and three years since, at least,” he informs Mr. Sheppard,‡ “I promised Mr. Collins, of Glasgow, to write a piece or two for his reprints of some of the valuable older religious books, of which he has already republished a considerable number, with, in each instance, a prefixed essay by one or other of our contemporary manufacturers of composition. Not without some reluctance on my part, he fixed *Doddridge’s Rise and Progress* on me. I was soon to write the introductory essay (or whatever such a nondescript kind of thing ought to be called), and *he* would soon print the book. He did his part with a despatch not at all pleasing to me, and actually the whole large edition has been lying as dead stock in the warehouse for two years, in default of my task being performed. Again and again he has written, and I have been too much ashamed even to answer his letters, though expressed in the most mild and friendly spirit. Bad health, to which I find that mental labor is *just* poison (to use a Scotch adverb), has been in alliance with my horror of composition—and so the procrastination has gone on, one six

\* To Mr. Hill, January 26, 1824.

† To Mr. Stokes, Jan. 3, 1826.

‡ To Mr. Sheppard, May 10, 1825.

months after another, while I have felt ashamed, and mortified, and self-reproached, at being thus the cause of a very serious loss, in the plain trade sense, to Chalmers and Collins. At last, however, these feelings, together with the excellent man's expostulations and remonstrances, have had the effect of driving me to try an attempt at the unwelcome service, and I have been for a number of weeks at the task, and a most melancholy one it has been, both for slow, hard toil, and the little value of the result." To Mr. Hill, he says (July 1), "In my last I befooled myself once again in my reckoning about the termination of the task-work. That *great event* is still several weeks off, three at least; probably more. There have, to be sure, been sundry days of interrupted or remitted industry; but mainly, I have been at it. I find far more revision and correction necessary in transcribing for the press than I had expected, notwithstanding the warning of all former experience. Several parts thus far I have had to write anew and differently; minor corrections to an endless amount. The thing will be longer than I had thought or intended; it will be as much, probably, as 120 pages. My *master* from Glasgow was here a few days since, and seemed to be content to put the cudgel in the corner, on finding that the thing was *bonâ fide* almost done. To think how much ado, of talking, fretting, pacing the room morning and night, pleading excuse from preaching and visiting, setting aside of plans for South Wales, &c., &c.,—and all for what?—a preface to Doddridge's *Rise and Progress*! And a preface bearing no reference to the book—a preface having absolutely no assignable object or topic! Indeed, this last circumstance of having no object, has been one of the grand grievances. If one has a topic, there is some definite thing to aim at. But when it is just saying, 'You, all of you, *ought to be religious*!' you are on a ground where you have no pathway, no direction, no one thing to drive at; one thing might just as well be said as another; it is matter of chance what you shall think to say; and often you are, that is, *I am*, in a perfect vacancy, and have *nothing* to say. Save me ever henceforward from the ground of flat, interminable common-place!" In the following October, he informs the same friend, "That sag which I had confidently reckoned on getting through by April, by May, by June, and lastly, time enough, at all events, to revisit you in Pembrokeshire, held me till about six weeks ago, when I sent the last few pages to bring the thing through the press. It

stretched, and thinned, and languished out to the length of about 160 printed pages. . . . I have a very moderate estimate of the performance, except in point of correctness and condensation. It was almost all labored at under a miserable feeling of contraction and sterility. Still I venture to think there are parts of it for which it must be the fault of the readers if they be not the better. I do not know whether I shall be induced to do, on a much more confined scale of extent, another thing or two for the same employers. But, indeed, I shall have to see whether they will ask me." . . .

In all the relations of domestic life, Mr. Foster found ample cause for satisfaction and gratitude ; but during his residence at Downend, the uncertain tenure of the purest of earthly enjoyments was painfully indicated by the state of Mrs. Foster's health, which often excited considerable apprehension. His own frame, also, as the preceding extracts show, had suffered not slightly from long-continued and severe mental application. It was, however, not till a few years after their removal to Stapleton, that the family circle was broken by the removal of their only son. His education was carried on at home (a short period excepted), till he was placed under Mr. Bullar's care, at Southampton. Here he continued till the spring of 1825, when symptoms of incipient disease, accompanying a too rapid growth, occasioned his return to the parental roof. It is the testimony of his highly respected instructor, that he was "a boy of good parts, and of a strong and clear understanding, but a most remarkably reserved disposition. Of the discourses which he heard, and of the other religious instruction that he habitually received, he always gave so clear and well-arranged an account as to prove that he both attended to and understood them."\* In a few months he appeared so far recovered that his parents ventured to place him in the Protestant Dissenters' Grammar School at Mill Hill. "I hope John and you," his father writes to the editor, "will be under the same roof about twenty hours after the time that I am writing this note. I cannot at all pretend to say whereabouts in the classes he will be properly entered. A few questions of the tutors to himself as to what he has done, will soon determine the matter. I am sorry that he will not commence on higher ground. From the want of any school during many of his earlier years, and from partly my indolence

\* Lay Lectures on Christian Faith and Practice, by JOHN BULLAR, Southampton, 1844, p. 493.

and partly my occupations, he did not begin the course of anything to be called learning till long after the proper time of his boyhood. And indolence has been, as to himself, rather too palpable a quality he has inherited from me. Any unadroitness which he may betray at first, will be fairly in part attributable to his having been really and physically disabled for application for the greatest part of the last three months. I had intended to have kept him in hard exercise during the interval between his leaving Southampton and going to Mill Hill; but the illness that brought him prematurely home, and the subsequent long debility from which he is but barely now recovered, would have made that impossible, even if it had not been judged beneficial for him to go on the long visit to Bourton, and if I had not been all this while miserably occupied about—you know what.”\*

After having been at Mill Hill only a few weeks, he relapsed into debility, accompanied by cough and the rupture of a blood-vessel. A visit to Lyme appeared to be of some service, and he regained somewhat of his strength before the approach of winter, but was still incapable of any considerable exertion. Though by taking every precaution the progress of disease was in a measure retarded, the symptoms reappeared more decidedly in the ensuing spring and summer. “You kindly inquire after our John,” Mr. Foster writes to Mr. Hill, “whom the Sovereign hand has stricken. He returned hither, by a tedious and painful journey, after a sojourn of ten weeks on the coast, reduced to much greater weakness than when he went. It will be a satisfaction to have made the experiment, but it has been of no avail. He is unable to walk up stairs to bed, and is as thin and pallid as almost it seems possible for a living person to be. The plain and mournful truth is, that there is not the slightest probability of anything now to follow but a gradual decline, or a sudden fall into the bed of dust.

“How melancholy it is to behold him thus evidently sinking under the fatal pressure! And I am anxiously concerned that his dear mother, in her feebleness of body, with a spirit habitually tending to droop, and so long oppressed, and almost exhausted by care, and vigilance, and hopelessness for him, should not also be reduced to such debility as would become serious illness.

“In this extinction of all hope of his life, our chief solicitude is respecting his higher and future interests. His situation has

\* To the Editor, July 25, 1825.

not been declared to him in the most plain and absolute terms, but strongly intimated; and I believe his own internal presages are to the same effect. But I feel it my painful duty to lay aside, without further delay, all equivocal language,—not, however, expecting he will feel any surprise. . . . He has been a good boy, remarkably free from all but the very minor faults of moral character; of sober disposition, perfectly obedient, and, I believe, of good intention. That such a mind should feel any violent sense of guilt, or overwhelming terrors of divine justice, it would be out of all consistency to expect or require. But I *am* anxious that he should feel an impressive *general* conviction of a depraved and unworthy nature, and the necessity of pardon and reconciliation through Jesus Christ; that he should especially be sensible of the evil and guilt of a deficient love and devotion to God, and of the indisposition to apply the thoughts, desires, and earnest efforts to the grand business of life. This order of conviction and solicitude I wish and pray that he may feel, and then, after a life so nearly blameless, in a *practical* view, I should be greatly consoled and assured. My apprehensions of the extent of divine mercy, and of the terms of hope and safety for poor mortals, are widely remote from the austerity of the systematic divines.” Within little more than a month from the date of this letter, the event anticipated took place, though not till the hearts of his parents had been relieved from their deepest anxiety, and delightfully consoled by receiving from their son the calm, unreserved expressions of Christian faith and hope. Five days after his decease, his father wrote, “John has left us now (all but his wan, insensible form), no more to return. . . . The last complete sentence he uttered was, ‘I know that my Redeemer liveth.’ This was near the close; he retained his faculties till within the very last hour; then, about midnight, seemed to sleep; and expired, I believe, without the sense of suffering. . . . My interest in the accumulation of valuable books in this room will be sensibly lessened by the extinction of the anticipation of their being hereafter a source of instruction and gratification to him. He needs now no such means of knowledge. And how many things by this time he knows, which no books can tell! Late in his illness he mentioned it as one pleasing circumstance in the idea of the superior world, that knowledge will beam into the soul without the slow labor of difficult acquisition.”\*

\* To the Editor, Oct. 10, 1826.



## LETTERS.

CVIII. TO THE REV. JOSEPH HUGHES.

*Downend, Nov. 19, 1818.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,— . . . I really did "*dare*" to anticipate success in my application for Howe's Works. But since you seem on that subject as impracticable as Captain Ross has just found the barrier to the entrance so confidently expected into the Polar Sea, I have now to renew the application ; . . . for I cannot surrender the object altogether.

. . . It is considerably an object to me to *have* the works of that man ; but it is also a condition of their being of any material use to me, to have them in the *older form*, for the plain good reason that the new edition is printed in a type too small for the weakness of my eyes ; I could not read such a book an hour without their warning me to shut it up. But really I have no certainty that you will not take this for *mere pretence*. You have quite a habit, I have observed, of putting such a construction, when any previously formed opinion requires to be maintained by that interpretation. You never really believed, at least to the extent of the most moderate terms in which I described it, my alleged physical difficulty and inconvenience in public speaking,—an inconvenience of which all the imputations of pretence and caprice are by far the least of the grievances. The same imputation of *pretence* you made, I recollect, on my alleged reason for declining, some time last year I think, to go to Horsley to meet Dr. Chalmers, when my foot was swelled, and under medical treatment for a recent accident so injurious that I feel the bad effects of it at this very hour, after an hour's walk, and fear that I shall feel them as long as I live.\* But enough of this. The present object is to obtain a copy of Howe's Works which I can read with some degree of convenience ; and that cannot be the new edition. At the same time I must acknowledge that there is with me another point of preference in the old edition : namely, that in the *new* one, I recollect the Editor engaged, as a favor to the readers, to make (and I suppose he did make) some little tinkering of the long, involved, and grotesquely-constructed sentences ; a thing sufficiently wanted I allow, for it is quite wonderful that such a man as Howe should have bungled so sadly in the matter of sentence-making. But, nevertheless, I should prefer having

\* " Chalmers was, the last two Sundays and the intermediate week, at or near Horsley, where he has a sister. He preached on both these Sundays for Winterbotham, who came hither with a gig to take me to Horsley in the intermediate week ; but in the state my foot was then in, I felt it quite out of the question to go to a distance from remedies and the doctor. If the *lower* end had permitted, the *upper* might assuredly have gained very considerable advantage from the society of that strong-minded Scotchman."—*Mr. Foster to B. Stokes, Esq., Bourton, May, 1817.*

his paragraphs just as he had made them, to *any* Editor's rectification of them,—a preference, however, which cannot be supposed to be felt by any gentleman of the literary firm of Burder and Hughes, the Editors and correctors of *Henry's Exposition*.

. . . . I do not know whether it may at all avail me to set up any defence in answer to your impeachment for lavish and inexcusable expense in matter of graphical art; which impeachment would have been in much stronger terms if you had seen *all* the acquisitions of that kind, with an inventory of *prices*. My defence would very honestly begin with an acknowledgment of the justice of the accusation to *some certain extent*, and an avowal of most sincere intentions of *reformation*. Old *Conscience* has often been saying something on the matter. But it does not by any means identify itself in its terms of reprehension with the external accuser, as to the *degree* of the criminality. For one thing, supposing the indulgence in question were considered as a mere personal gratification, I have to say that during the period of this luxurious indulgence (the last eight or nine years) I have been in *all other* personal expenses far below any other man I know, who might be in tolerable pecuniary condition. I have . . . . cared nothing for furniture, or any of the paraphernalia of what is called genteel life; and especially have spent nothing, with about one solitary exception, in the great luxury of travelling, while all around me have been making excursions of pleasure, and of pleasure grafted on business, in this direction, and in that—to London, or Paris, or the Lakes, or twenty other ways. Directly as *substitutes* (and substitutes not to be consumed in the using) for such indulgences, some of my graphical purchases have been made, consisting, as they mainly do, of scenery and antiquities. “I cannot,” I have said, “make the Tour of the Coast, but I may have Daniell's, and Turner and Cooke's most beautiful *views* of the aspects of those maritime objects and scenes; which views, besides, may be beheld by fifty other persons in succession, and will retain their full value even after a thousand people may have seen them.” And so of other fine representative works. But many of the fine works in this den, such as Humboldt's South America, Hamilton's Campi Phlegræi (which you saw), Choiseul's Greece, &c., &c., are representative of scenes altogether beyond the reach of actual inspection, but scenes of high interest, and about which all cultivated men are talking. If those scenes are among the most striking and interesting on earth, worth remote and hazardous journeys (for those who can afford it) to *see*, it is a thing of no small value for a man to have at command, for fixing their images in his own mind, and the minds of all cultivated persons around him, fine, and confessedly faithful delineations of them. Why, what sort of deposition would it be as to the quality, for instance, of your George's opening mind, if he will not for life be the better, in point of clear conception of volcanoes and their accessories, for having seen Hamilton's admirable views of such objects? I know that to *me* such a thing happening in my boyhood would have been of value

to this hour. I repeat that such auxiliaries give the means of forming clear ideas of many things of which no descriptions *can give* clear ideas. I repeat, too, the assertion of the great value of such imagery, thrown into the imagination of a man of any genius, for the purposes of such illustration, as it is of great advantage for a preacher, or any other instructor, to be able spontaneously to mingle in his discourse.

Again, you speak of this expense, just as if it were the *absolute alienation* and *consumption* of so much property; whereas it is obviously only the loss of the *interest*; and *that* loss to be set against all the good which I am alleging. Now, if I had been in the habit, during a number of years past, of expending, in the absolute sense, just *so much as this interest*, in journeys to see remarkable things, with a trifling addition of the ordinary matters of polished life, &c., &c., I do believe that nobody would ever have thought of calling it extravagance.

. . . . I am tempted to say (rather *ad hominem*), that you have always appeared to me much less sensible than is almost claimed in each case of a highly cultivated mind, to the aspects of beauty and magnificence in *real Nature*, which such works are meant to represent; and *just so much of the defect have you suffered in the qualifications of an orator.*

This is somewhat more than enough to have said on the subject; nor is all this meant as a retractation of my commencing admission of excess in this indulgence of taste; nor of denial that I have many a time been indignant at the thought of the heavy bill from Paternoster-row, when occasions have occurred on which I should have been glad to have been able to contribute to some valuable purpose and deserving object four half guineas instead of one.

Methinks it should not be one of the worst indications as to the effect of these luxuries, that I am thus trying with all my might to get possession of an easily readable copy of the works of John Howe. But, indeed, that very John Puritan Howe (shame on him for railing for ever at this so picturesque a planet) was exceedingly delighted with the scenery and antiquities of Italy, whither he travelled when near my age; and, had his fortune been to live now, he would most certainly, if debarred that actual contemplation, have purchased a copy of Campi Phlegraei, and of Hake-well's exquisite Picturesque Tour of Italy, now publishing.

I end as I began, with Howe's Works; pray send word by the first opportunity to Thornbury to have the book packed and sent as aforesaid. It will be mere perversity to leave it there till any such remote time as you talk of—"next summer." By being soon here, it may before that time have done ever so much good service to me, and by me to other people. . . .

---

#### CIX. TO JOHN SHEPPARD, ESQ.

[Relating to a Manuscript on War, 1819.]

BEING willing to assure myself, that by this time the anxiety of domestic interest is so much remitted as to allow your partial return to

literary concerns, I am vexed to have so long detained your MS., especially as it was not from any critical propensity, but merely for the purpose of a re-inspection, that I had expressed a wish to see it again. Nor do I feel any prompting to indulge in annotation. I do not see what, *upon your system*, you can materially mend or alter. I still question (as you will readily suppose without my saying it), whether the system does not approximate too near quakerism to be quite feasible, even if a few of the bodies politic of this wicked planet were better disposed than any of them is. But any rate, the essay furnishes a great deal of new suggestion, argument, and illustrative detail, on a most important subject, which wants to be forced into discussion by all manner of means, and which *cannot* be *seriously* discussed without *some* advantage, especially in this season of half-repentant collapse and nausea, after the fury and intoxication of war.

To such a public discussion, I think your performance will be a valuable contribution. . . . It is of little comparative consequence, that the reader does not coincide in a number of the subordinate points,—that he is dissentient in matters of *mode and degree*,—if he is drawn into accordance in the main substance of the principles,—if he is made to feel, that this whole business of war and glory *must* be transferred from the jurisdiction of the statesman's creed and morality to that of the Christian,—and finds, that after it is so transferred, there is an assignable form of theory and duty marked out to him, much short of quakerism, which he is invincibly compelled to regard as absurd.

The Peace Society has quite paralysed itself, for any extensive utility, by the adoption of the idle non-resistance notion. It may be presumed that many minds, abhorring the war-madness, but yet totally unable to accord with the Quakers, as deeming their notions a dereliction of common sense, will be gratified to find *between* the extremes, something which they can substantially approve, however much they may consider some of the detail as matter for re-discussion. I think the work cannot fail to do some good; at the same time you are most perfectly aware, how unstatesmanlike, how unheroic, how unpoetic, and all that, its doctrines, and scruples, and limitations, will look, to such readers as the present age has peculiarly tended to form, and the nominal Christianity of the nation has very little served to correct.

---

CX. TO JOHN SHEPPARD, ESQ.

[On the decease of Mrs. S.]

January 21, 1820.

MY DEAR SIR,—When I last left your house, after a visit exceedingly interesting to me, I ventured to hope that I should yet again see your amiable associate, and under happier circumstances of amended health to her, and alleviated anxiety to you. In such a judgment as could be

formed, on so brief and transient an acquaintance, she appeared to me well adapted to engage and return the tenderest affection ; and I should have congratulated your union, *if* I could have learnt that the anticipations of those best qualified to judge, were in favor of a full restoration of her health. This pleasure was denied me, but yet I did not feel in her company the omens, that this my first interview with her was to be the last. It would have been melancholy to have received her extremely kind attentions with such a presentiment. I subsequently heard of alternations which must have caused you a most painful, habitual apprehensiveness ; but the latest accounts, before I went on a long excursion to the south, seemed to authorize a pleasing hope ; so that I heard, at length, the intelligence of the fatal event with a degree of surprise ; and it is even still difficult for me to realize the truth, that the person, whose *only* image, in my mind, bears the bloom of youth and the living expression of intelligence and kindness, is now laid cold and silent in the dust.

But, indeed, it is not *she* that is laid there ; and if, in your indulgence of pensive thought, you follow her *thither*, but so often in proportion to the frequency of the ascent to follow her to another region, as that dead form is less the essential being of your departed friend than her happy spirit is,—what a grand predominance you will have of the bright over the gloomy contemplations ! It is true, that affection cannot consent to any disparagement of even the dead form of the beloved object ; it will hover tenderly over its bed in the dust ! well, but let faith be there too ; and then even *there* also the contemplation becomes bright, on hearing Him that has the keys of death say, “ I will raise it up at the last day.”

It is delightful that you can dwell with decided assurance on the piety of your departed associate. You can thus regard her as having passed beyond the very last of the pains and sorrows appointed to her existence by her Creator, as looking back on them *all*, and having entered on an eternity of unmingled joy ; as having completed a short education for a higher sphere and a nobler society ; as having attained since she was your companion, and by the act of ceasing to be so, *that* in comparison with which the whole sublunary world is a trifle ; as having left your abode because her presence was required among the blessed and exalted servants of the supreme Lord in heaven.

---

CXI. TO JOHN EASTHOPE, ESQ.

*Downend, April 27, 1820.*

MY DEAR SIR,—I cannot express to you with how much mortification it is this time my ill fortune to write to you.

At this tedious, heavy job, which has occupied me so long, I have been doing my best for a number of weeks past, with a confidence entertained, till within the last seven or eight days, that I could force it to a conclusion by the end of this month. But within this last number of days

(within about the time since I wrote to Mr. Stokes), I have found it perfectly impossible, with every other stimulus to impel me, and the strong additional one of anticipating to meet him at your house, absolutely impossible to make anything like such progress, or half such progress, as I had promised myself. That assurance to myself was made, not on a reckoning of more diligence (for I was already keeping hard at it), but in the expectation that I should find less to alter in the last portion of the job. But since that time I have found the obstructions seem to grow still more obstinate than before, it has been literally marching by the means of cutting my way through an entangled thicket. I have been confounded to find how much absolutely *must* be altered in almost every page; partly to make the general drift direct and obvious, partly in making the sentences individually clear and intelligible, partly in making the relation and junctures of the thoughts more correct and strict, partly in compressing the language, and I might say, partly many things more. All these matters of process I have found on my hands at once, in paragraph after paragraph, with only here and there, very rarely, a bit of clear ground of the extent of two or three sentences. I have fretted and wondered, but this was of no use; there was nothing for it but to *work*. It would not do to say, It shall even go as it is. I knew the captiousness of readers, and the spite of critics too well for that. And for the thing itself, independently of those considerations, it was desirable not to let anything go defective and wrong, if it were possible to set it right; which I never despair of being able to effect in the long run, though at first I cannot at all see or guess how. I have also wished to do the thing as nearly as possible in a manner to need no alterations in case of another edition. It is very unfair to the purchasers of the first, not to make a diligent effort to secure the point. In that respect, though not intentionally at the time, I sinned very deeply in my first job of book-making; and was self-admonished to be very careful to avoid the same transgression in any future instance.

. . . . You are very kind in assuring me a quiet room for shop-work at Finchley; but really it would be altogether out of the question to pretend to perform the inevitable task anywhere but on the shop-board in this garret, where I keep at it the whole substance of the day. It would be in contravention to the whole attractions of sociality and friendship, and the whole object of my visiting London, to spend much time there in such business. An hour or two of the morning would be all that could go to it, and that is precisely the part of the day in which I am always the least up to the working pitch. . . .

---

CXII. TO THE REV. JOSEPH HUGHES.

*Downend, 1821.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,—A packet to the printer may convey a few lines not addressed to the *public*,—that monster of a reader to which the

author is willing to attribute some hundred thousand eyes. But I have not time to say much, for I do not know that I have ever been much harder tasked. A great tardiness of the press has thus far been a real advantage to me, or at least to the job in hand. With the first third part, or so, of the Essay now reprinting, I was never anything near satisfied, any more than, it seems, the readers are. It was begun (on the mere force of a determination to do something at any rate) in a dreary season of the year, which always has a malignant influence on my mental faculties; and prosecuted a great way on under the notion of making it only a long *discourse*. For more than two months past I have been applying my whole strength, to make it what I can be content for it to remain, without any future alteration. And never was labor more truly in vain, if I have not *very greatly* improved this first third part: but indeed I know I *have* greatly mended it. As it now stands, it is more than half a *re-composition*; and, as all the alterations and additions were to be adjusted constantly into the old train of the composition, the labor has probably been more than would have been required to write, independently, as much as the whole. Many of the ideas have been more clearly expressed, the *sequence* has been, in various instances, made more obvious, and here and there a sparkle has been struck, even from the cold opaque flint of *winter*, or the *more* cold and opaque substance of the subject. The quantity added will probably make 120 pages of the first edition run to as much as 150 or 160 of the new. But the language has been compressed, while the topics have been dilated. The job, in short, has been so worked, that I shall now feel a *most perfect, immovable* assurance that any further complaints of *obscurity, involvement, &c.*, will be but proofs of the reader's want either of attention or capacity. I wish to believe that in the further progress I shall not find any great degree of correction necessary; and besides, the more popular and stimulant quality of the topics will more easily obtain an excuse for a less finished composition. Nor can *time* be allowed for much of this slow labor; for I shall be very desirous not to delay the printing.

Holdsworth sent me the *British Review*, in which, in the terms, "exquisite precision of language," I fancy I see a recognition (and the only one I ever have seen or heard) of that which I consider as the advantageous peculiarity of my diction; namely, if I may use such a phrase, its *verity* to the ideas,—its being composed of words and constructions merely and directly fitted to the thoughts, with a perfect disregard of any general model, and a rejection of all the set and artificial formalities of phraseology in use, even among good writers: I may add, a special truth and consistency in all language *involving figure*. If you are beginning to say, "Let another praise thee, and not thyself," I may ask whether it should not be an excepted case when that "other" has not sense to see anything in me to praise. Quite enough, however, of the subject.

## CXIII. TO THE REV. JOSEPH HUGHES.

*Downend, April 27, 1821.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,—Mr. Holdsworth has detached and sent to me the half of a letter to him from you, relative to the poor "book," which, it seems, after all the care and toil expended upon it, is still obnoxious to so many inculpations.

. . . . The writer's perfectly knowing his own meaning may sometimes deceive him as to what will be the reader's perception; as in the instance you have noted, p. 159, line 16, "with then a reflection," &c. I was not sensible that the meaning would not be obviously this,—with a reflection then made, or next made, on himself, as being that bad character himself;—a right judgment first made of the badness of such a disposition, and then, next, a reflection on himself as chargeable with that wicked disposition.\*

An habitual, *ah* historical, I do invincibly nauseate and abhor. It infallibly produces the babyish pronunciation, *an istorical*, *an abitual*. And it is the most palpable violation of consistency, since nothing could look and sound more foolish than *an istory*, *an abii*. I care not what authority there may be in the case; the thing is on the face of it absurd.

"A vast deal too," &c., is certainly a *good* deal colloquial. There are a number of things in the volume of the same class; and they were deliberately (and not inadvertently) admitted, from a detestation of a stately, formal, measured, *high-level* sort of style, like that of Robertson or Blair. Let any one observe how often this sort of phrases occurs in the prose works of Dryden, whose style is perhaps the best in our language,—except in some points of mere grammatical correctness, to which the times he wrote in had not quite attained. This very construction that I am here falling into—"the times he wrote *in*," is one of the kind of things which you would find him continually using. And nothing can be more tiresome and odious than the perpetual *of which* and *in which*, for the purpose of avoiding the occurrence of the preposition at the end of a clause or sentence. Away with this stiff, pedantic formality! Accordingly I have here and there ended a sentence, or member of a sentence, with a preposition. In the very best *talking* such things would be freely admitted, and the careful, systematic avoidance of them would appear a foolish affectation. While noting such matters, I must insist on your observing and acknowledging one point in which

\* "The habitual indulgence of the irascible, vexatious, and malicious tempers, to the plague and terror of all within reach, scarcely ever becomes a subject of judicial estimate, as a character hateful in the abstract, with then a reflection of that estimate on the man's own self."—*Essay on Popular Ignorance*, third edit., 1834, p. 145; last edit., 1845, p. 112 (*for them read then*).

In the first edit., 1820, p. 123, the latter part of the sentence stood thus:—"as a character viewed in the abstract, with then a reflection of that estimate on the man's own self to whom the character belongs."



I excel my contemporaries. I give greater competence and power to the *verb* and *participle*; making them often express the sense completely, where, according to the ordinary modes of writing, a botheration of two or three little additional words would have been brought in.

You are quite right in some of your *comma* criticisms; but I do not observe that in any of the instances the *sense* is perverted or obscured; and unless that were the case, it would be doing mischief to note them in "errata," because this would, at the reader's first glance, give a sort of *insignificance* to the said *errata*, and prevent his noticing particularly any thing that might be corrected there.

As to punctuation, considered generally, let me assure you that there is not, and there cannot be, any decided and practically available canon. If you would attempt to follow strictly an *intellectual* rule, you would only make your page almost impossible to be read; for *that* would require you sometimes to divide one single line into several bits, and then not to admit one stop in four, five, or six lines together. After a very few rules obviously dictated by the *sense*, there is no further guide for you than to consider *what pauses a person reading aloud will want, to help him conveniently through the sentence*. As to the comma preceding, and at the end of the *parenthesis*, I have adhered to that singularity, if it is such, for no other material reason than simply because I fell into this mode without much thinking about it, in the early part of the volume. At the same time, it does appear to me to be a proper mode, for the plain reason that a reader aloud, or a speaker, actually does and must make a pause at the beginning and end of a parenthesis. But perhaps you will say, that the graphical mark of a parenthesis is considered as being itself the mark for a *pause*, as well as the mark for a distinct thought. If that be the truth, and a settled point, my practice is certainly wrong.

A number of your remarks, you would be fully aware, cannot be applied to use now that the whole thing is printed and ended; as when, for instance, you suggest that certain associations for benevolent purposes might, in one place, have been pertinently alluded to.

In one expression you seem to impute "numerous obscurities" to the composition, that is, to the meaning. It would be foolish to assume that there are really *none*, in a book of which so large a proportion consists of reflections, sentiments, and generalities, many of them of a nature remote from the obviousness of common-place; but I must keep firmly to my text, that if the reader thinks the obscurities are "numerous," it is very much his own fault.

Very great pains have been taken with the "Discourse" part of the book; and I am disposed to account the last paragraph in the volume about the most successful sample of amendment in the whole of it. That paragraph had not from the first satisfied me. The object was, to pass from that particular topic, from the one specific "form" of evil (the paganism of the East) to make the peroration the more solemn, the more applicable to *duty in general*, and to every one's duty, and also the more

correspondent to the comprehensive view of moral evil at the beginning of the Discourse, by directing the concluding thoughts to the great *general* view of the conflict against sin. This was not, I always felt, successfully done in the original form. The transition was abrupt; and some of the first sentences of the passage, though they had the right *material*, did not develope it clearly. But how many hours of the utmost effort of my mind it cost to put the paragraph into its present form! What an effort to reduce the wide, and remote, and shadowy, element of the thought to what, I am willing to believe, is now a definite expression!\*

## \* FIRST EDITION.

"My brethren, against this prodigious form, and against the whole dreadful power, of evil, it is our vocation to be engaged in the war. It were in vain to wish to escape from the condition of our place in the universe of God. Amidst the darkness that veils from us the state of that vast empire, we would willingly be persuaded that this our world may be the only region (excepting that of penal justice), where the cause of evil is permitted to maintain a contest. Here perhaps may be almost its last encampment, where its prolonged power of hostility may be suffered, in order to give a protracted display of the manner of its destruction. Here our lot is cast, on a ground so awfully pre-occupied; a calamitous distinction! but yet a sublime one, if thus we may render to the eternal King a service in which better tribes of his creatures may not share; and if thus we may be trained, through devotion and conformity to the celestial Chief in this warfare, to the final attainment of what he has promised, in so many illustrious forms, to him that overcometh. We shall soon leave the region where so much is in rebellion against our God. We shall go where all that pass from our world must present themselves as from battle, or be denied to mingle in the eternal joys and triumphs of the conquerors."—Pp. 131, 132.

## THIRD EDITION.

"For us, and our period of time, there is not only this one grand domination of moral evil, standing in hideous tyranny over a large portion of our world; in many forms of more immediate invasion of ourselves, that worst enemy maintains a powerful and dreadful presence. We require to be kept in a habitual and alarming sense of the fact, that the one thing in the creation which surpasses all others as an object for hatred, is here amidst us, and all around, in many diversities of malignant existence, and with all of them it is our vocation to be at enmity and war. It were in vain to seek to escape from the condition of our place in the dominions of God. A mind of wandering and melancholy thought, impatient of the grievous realities of our state, may at some moments almost breathe the wish that we had been a different order of beings, in another dwelling-place than this, and appointed on a different service to the Almighty. In vain! Here still we are, to pass the first part of our existence in a world, where it is impossible to be at peace, because there has come into it a mortal enemy to all that live in it. Darkness and silence over the universe deny us all knowledge of the inhabitants of its innumerable worlds; but we would willingly believe that this may be the only region (except that of penal justice), where the cause of evil is permitted to maintain a contest. Here perhaps may be almost its last encampment, where its prolonged power of hostility may be suffered, in order to give a protracted display of the manner of its appoint-

In this same Discourse my veneration for my old master's authority has suppressed *two* anti-cleric clauses; *one* in the enumeration of the classes in which there were found the most virulent enemies of the project for converting the Hindoos; and *one* where, in a mock supposition of a crusade of officers, merchants, &c., against the Hindoo superstition, "prelates" were put at the head, or at the tail of the expedition. This should be somewhat of a set-off against the story of the *bull-baiting*.\*

Several sentences which your marginal marks had pointed to as capable of correction, remain as they were. I perceived the defects clearly enough, but I was at last pressed for time (by the printer, whom I had at your direction be-labored), was become exceedingly jaded by long exertion, and did not see how to mend the faults (consistently with the compression and condensation which I have uniformly labored to preserve), without spending some hours a-piece on each of those sentences. It is amazing what trouble it is to re-construct, in an amended form, a single sentence, when it includes several ideas, when you have to take care of the juncture with what precedes and follows, and when you are resolved it shall be but one sentence, in whatever form it may be put.

Reverting to your "authority," it would be little less formidable to me than any exertion of that of the Grand Turk, if it could be made peremptory and absolute in the injunction conveyed in the last lines of your note (to Holdsworth), viz., "to project *another book* forthwith." Some time must pass before *any* authority can bring me into this hard service again. During a life which, I acknowledge with regret, and often with remorse, has been on the whole a very indolent one, I have never before made a mental exertion that has at all sensibly affected my health; but this last has done so. The confinement has been almost complete; and

ed destruction. Here our lot is cast, on a ground so awfully pre-occupied—a calamitous distinction! but yet a sublime one, if thus we may render to the eternal King a service of a more arduous kind than it is possible to the inhabitants of any other world than this to render him; and if thus we may be trained, through devotion and conformity to the celestial Chief in this warfare, to the final attainment of what he has promised, in so many illustrious forms, to him that overcometh. We shall soon leave the region where so much is in rebellion against our God. But we shall go where all that pass from our world must present themselves as from battle, or be denied to mingle in the eternal joys and triumphs of the conquerors."—Pp. 508-510.

\* *Evils of Popular Ignorance*, third edit., p. 102; edit., 1845, p. 79.

the continuance of the secluded exercise has been the greater from the circumstance that the excessively frail and delicate state of my excellent wife's health, put her in the autumn under the most peremptory interdiction of the medical folk to venture, even for an hour, into this miserably cold house. The attempt to pass a winter in it would, I have no manner of doubt, have been fatal. She has accordingly not been within its walls this nine or ten months, nor will venture to come within them for some weeks to come, nor probably to go out of doors at Overn, where she has been through the winter, in a house which makes absolutely a quite different climate from what it is in this. We shall leave this at all events at Michaelmas, without as yet having any decided prospect where to go next;—probably somewhere nearer to the city. This deprivation of domestic society, in which a number of the hours of the day used to be employed, in a much easier manner than the garret-den requires, has for the last half year consigned nearly the whole of my time to this same garret. And the very sensible physical bad effects require that I should for some time run loose. I am going about a week hence to spend a week or two at Worcester, amidst a deluge of vernal beauty.

. . . . I must endeavor (and I implore divine influence and assistance both to endeavor, and to endeavor with some *effect*) to do what little I can for God and religion in the latter part of my life. It is with deep regret that in this reference I often review its general course hitherto. In this regret I often congratulate *you* in my thoughts, on having employed the very long series of years since we were associates at Bristol, so very much in the manner that you would be grateful to heaven for having been led to employ them in, if you were now expecting an immediate summons to leave the world.

In concluding I would request you, my old, and dear, and invariably and unalterably respected friend, to accept my grateful acknowledgments for the interest you take in what I am doing, or may have done. Believe me *never* to have been unobservant or insensible of this, however seldom I may have *expressed* such feelings as I am doing now. I perfectly know that (after my wife) there is no mortal who will, with respect to this book, for instance, take a tenth part of the friendly and prolonged interest that you do.

As to that iniquitous sentence in the Discourse,\* after all, it would be foolish to account it so precious a jewel that not for the world should it

\* The administration of the funds for the ceremonial and abominations of idolatry, has been, to a very great extent, taken under the authority and care of the reigning power, composed of persons zealous, on this nearer side of a certain extent of water, for the established Christian religion; which establishment has also been recently extended to that further side,—with what effect toward exploding, or even modifying, this very marvelous policy, or whether deemed to be perfectly harmonious with it, we must wait to be informed.”—*Missionary Discourse*, p. 43, third edit., p. 411.

be left out, if any decided good were to be gained by its exclusion. But in the first place, the most of any harm it *could* do me has been done already. Secundo, its omission (so far as it can be supposed so slight a circumstance would attract any one's notice) would look like an acknowledgment of the author that he had done wrong, which, in this case, would be a most false impression; or supposing it regarded as a *time-serving* omission, you know well in what manner Dr. Paley's omission, in later editions of his *Moral Philosophy*, of the sentence, "The divine right of kings is the divine right of constables,"\* was regarded by honest men, and indeed by those who had no honesty to be offended. Tertio, the erasure (still on the supposition that such a circumstance could attract any notice) would give the bigoted traducer license to say, in the *absence* of the clause or sentence, that there had been in that place a most scandalous and malicious libel. The best way therefore will be, I think, to let the sentence stand as it is, and put a few lines of a note at the bottom, expressing in slight terms that the writer has been told that it has displeased some readers, but he should have been glad to know why;—and then just putting and leaving the case:—The government do two distinct things in India; they formally support and administer many of the idolatrous institutions, and they appoint there a Christian established church;—do they, or do they *not*, deem these two measures in harmony? If they do *not*, what is to be thought of such conduct? if they *do*, where is the wrong of the writer's *surmising* that they do? . . . .

---

CXIV. TO THE REV. JOHN FAWCETT.

*Downend, April 30, 1821.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,— . . . I hope you will give some credit when I say, that I did sincerely intend to answer, with little delay, your former letter. And also, you will understand how an almost invincible indisposition to writing of every kind may be augmented in the particular instance when we are sensible we cannot say that which would exactly please those to whom we write. I am alluding to the project of a monument to my revered old tutor. I will acknowledge that I have progressively acquired an aversion to all honorary monuments—excepting such as remaining from very ancient times are interesting to taste and imagination, just in the character of antiquities. As to such as are erected now, they are useless if the persons to whom they are raised would be remembered without them; and they are useless if those persons would *not* be remembered without them.

If a man has left monuments of himself in valuable works, of any

\* Vide Hume's *Essays*, Vol. i., p. 446, Essay xii.—"A constable, therefore, no less than a king, acts by a divine commission, and possesses an indefeasible right."

kind, literary or otherwise, which will engage attention and esteem long after he is departed, an inscribed and figured piece of stone (generally, besides, ill done as a matter of art) seems an idle superfluity. If he has *not* left such memorials, the monument will be of no use to his name, in future times. For if the *man* is unknown, the monument is merely a thing standing by itself, and does not bring the spectator into any sort of recognition of him—even supposing the spectator to believe the laudatory testimony inscribed upon it. But the worst of the matter is, that he will not feel the slightest confidence in the truth of such testimony. “It may be true,” he will say, “but the contrary is quite as probable.” Nothing is more notorious than the utter unworthiness of faith, which, as a *general* fact, is chargeable on monumental tributes. It is so notorious, that any particular monument which may bear a *true* testimony, will fall hereafter under the same incredulity, unless it is verified by other known and convincing memorials;—and if there *be* such memorials, then the monument is superfluous.

I recollect, that just about the time (perhaps a week before) that I received your letter on the subject, I happened, in a place of worship, to see a recently erected monument to a worthy minister who had been dead between twenty and thirty years. The greater number of the lines and epithets were appropriate, but there was *one*, of a very prominent nature, which I *knew* to be totally false;—false, not only in the sense that *that* was not the truth, but that a contrary expression would have been the truth. This marble, however, may remain probably as long as the excellent wall to which it is fixed, to be sometimes carelessly glanced at, by some individual in the congregation, knowing nothing of the man whose name is so recorded, and perhaps transiently, and with perfect indifference, thinking and saying within himself.—“I wonder whether, if the truth could be known, he was any such man as there described.”

. . . . Last autumn, after an interval of perhaps *fourteen* years! I saw for a short time our highly estimable old friend, Mr. Greaves, and his domestic associates; from whom I received a great deal of information about you, and the persons and circumstances of a neighborhood to which I have been, almost an age of man, a stranger. . . .

---

CXV. TO JOHN SHEPPARD, ESQ.

1821.

. . . . If I were to spend the remainder of the week in social gratification at F——, I should be little prepared even for *this*;—yet for this I should not so much mind, in a small place one is accustomed to, and among a small assemblage of old friends, one could say something or other to the purpose, and should not care much about the *quo modo*. But the two ensuing days would really be, *for me*, so miserably slow as I am in putting together my intellectual materials, utterly insufficient for a

fair preparation for the occasion of the next week. And besides, I find a languid tone of health into which I have latterly fallen, very seriously and injuriously affected by a forced and severe mental exertion. I have never recovered from the effect of the five or six months of iron bondage and labor in *new working* the *book business* for the second edition, last winter.

These sermons for *institutions*, &c., are a miserable sort of work for me, and I mean never to do any more of it. I am always quite certain I should have no "liberty," as we of this profession name it, if I should venture *extemporaneously* in large places to which one is totally unaccustomed. And then, as I have absolutely *no memory* at all, my premeditations are totally useless to me, unless, as I go on, I secure them *in writing*. Therefore, for these occasions, I am obliged to write nearly half as much as what is to be said. The consequence is most wretched; for unless I have a *long time*, after this writing is done, to read many times over the said indited sentences and hints, so as to have some little command of them beyond the immediate reach of my eye, I am hampered and stiffened in the delivery, having neither the *certainly* of reading, nor the *ease* of speaking.

CXVI. TO THE REV. JOHN FAWCETT.

*Downend, September 22, 1821.*

. . . . I suppose all the prominent circumstances (of a local nature) about *your* residence remain much as they were so many—many years since. I retain in my mind a lively picture of it, though less vivid and complete than of Brearley Hall, and the house, gardens, &c., at Foot. Those are the places of which I have the most of that kind of recollection which poets are so fond of describing. Subsequently to my several years' sojourn in those scenes, and in the society of the few coevals for whom I grew to feel a deep and unalterable regard (I need not say I chiefly mean yourself, Mr. Greaves, and your estimable sister),—subsequently to that season, I seemed to have retained but little capacity for acquiring interesting associations with places. Not I hope defective in grateful recollection of the kindness experienced from individuals in *every* place where my lot has been cast for a while, I yet feel but little of anything partaking of romantic sentiment in going back in imagination, to one, or another, of the local stages, if it may be so expressed, of thirty years of unsettled life. Nor can this appear strange, when I may fairly say, with respect to every place where a considerable space and time has been passed, that my habitual wish has been to leave it. As to any one of them, I should have revolted at the idea (supposing some voice, believed oracular, had pronounced it), that I should remain *there* the whole of this short life. As to the greater number of the places of sojourn, I should have been much chagrined at such an oracle pronounc-

ing at the commencement of the residence, that I should stay as long as in fact I did stay. Nevertheless, I always dread, when it comes to the point, the trouble of a removal,—regret to leave some small number of persons in the place, and always extremely dislike at first any new situation. There may be a great deal of perversity of feeling in all this, and I cannot be unaware of its too probably involving a serious reproach—namely, that of being too little intent, on serving in each, in any, in every situation the supreme Master, and doing every practicable good to fellow mortals. At the same time, it will sometimes appear to my fancy, as if such an unsettled course were more in analogy with the condition of this life, as a transient sojourn—as a pilgrimage to another world. Well, whether in a stationary or more wandering way of life, we shall at no very distant period attain the final term. Within this week I have completed my fifty-first year, and I believe that you have attained the same age, or perhaps a year or two beyond me. It is sometimes only through the absolute force of dates, that I can believe I have advanced so far toward old age. But (should life be protracted) it will not be long before other mementos than those of mere chronology will powerfully press upon us. Indeed, in the article of *sight* (so important especially to a person whose business is among books and writing), I am of late receiving strong admonition every day and hour. Let us commit all to Him who has been our great benefactor and guardian hitherto, and pray that the latter part of our life, short as it will probably be in comparison with the portion which is past, may be, in the most important respects, far the best of it all—that our descendants may see happier times in this world, and that they and we may all at length meet in an infinitely better. I am glad to believe, that you have cause for pleasing anticipations in regard to your family; while your pensive recollections of *one* no longer seen among them, must be mingled often with inexpressible delight.

. . . . As a monument *was* to be raised to my venerable tutor, I am glad it has been done by a *real artist*. The inscription in its final form, appears to be altered for the better. Had I written immediately after reading your letter, I should have had a number of things to say in comment on your observations on the use of monuments. With respect to Westminster Abbey especially, I recollect that I was to have said that, though I have gone to the expense of a most admirable graphical work respecting it, it would at any time be a great luxury to me, to accompany a few athletic men with pole-axes to be most vigorously wielded, with just here and there an omission, in a process which I will leave to your imagination. With the here and there excepted instance, what do we see exhibited in memorial there, but the names and insignia of beings who were a nuisance and a pest upon the earth? You quote Nelson's speech, with a flattering change of words;—it was (as recorded), "*A Peerage or Westminster Abbey*," an expression which I have always recollected as one of the most remarkable displays ever made of a con-



temptible littleness of passion and purpose in what is called a great man. . . . I am pleased to hear your testimony, that the book I published some time since is materially improved in the second edition. Had this not been perceptible, the case would have been one of the most deplorable instances of labor lost.

---

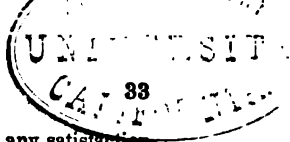
CXVII. TO THE REV. JOSIAH HILL.\*

*Stapleton, November, 1822.*

MY DEAR SIR,— . . . Even your vanity will hardly be competent to imagine how much I have felt the loss of your near neighborhood. Going into Bristol, or the thought of doing it (I mean for an hour or a day, not for residence), is now quite a different thing, and I do it much less frequently. With all due regard for my friends there (and they are very worthy ones), I must confess that the *special* point of attraction is gone; and the grievance is, that there is no hope of its being there again. My maledictions have not been slight, nor seldom repeated, upon that Methodist system of yours, which will let nothing stay in a place that one would most wish to keep there. My good wife most cordially says Amen, to these imprecations,—till we recollect that this is doubtless a part of the system tending very powerfully on the whole to its utility.

You allow me to believe that, as yet, Mrs. Hill feels no bad effects of the London atmosphere. And I cannot say that I much wish she should, since any change of station, which that might cause at the end of the first year, would be little likely to bring her and you to any locality nearer Bristol. It might only take you to Scotland, or nobody knows where. On another account, however, I could certainly wish you compelled to change the situation to one of less work, bustle, and interruption. For I think that project about Baxter is eminently worth prosecuting; and I take it to be quite certain that no such thing can be effectually done till you retire to a more quiet position. It will else probably never be accomplished at all; or if it should, it will be in a manner which will oblige you to cant a preface in the customary strain of—“The author is sensible the work is done in a very imperfect manner, far from fully satisfactory to himself, and he hopes his readers will allow him to apologize by pleading want of time, great variety of avocations,” &c., &c., &c., to which the readers might, in *this* case, very rightly reply, “And

\* Mr. Foster's acquaintance with Mr. Hill began about the year 1812, probably on the occasion of Mr. Hill's visiting his sister, who resided in the neighborhood of Bourton. Twenty years later, Mr. F., in one of his letters, speaks of him as “a man of very great and rare excellence; pious, benevolent, intelligent, and of liberal spirit and sentiments, with large knowledge and experience of mankind.” The letters addressed to him in these volumes, and selected from a much larger mass, sufficiently attest Mr. Foster's high estimate of his character, and the cordiality of their friendship. Mr. Hill survived Mr. F. only a few weeks.



*whose fault is it that you were in all this bustle? Is it any satisfaction to us, the purchasers and readers, that you preferred your temporary row of popularity to the benefit you might have afforded us, and those after us, by doing the thing in a much better manner?"* I doubted whether you would have much success in the collation of the remainder of old Richard's works. Your career of cheap purchases, at least, is nearly at an end. You will have no more opportunities of establishing among dealers such a character as you have left behind you among those in Bristol; namely, that of the hardest bargainer in Christendom. I dare say it would be very edifying to you to hear them make the comparison between you and—*somebody else*.

. . . . But too much of books. Next time you can afford leisure enough to fill a sheet, I shall hope to hear how you like the new situation in respect to its religious aspect, and its preaching services. . . . I hope that at all events you will see proof that you are not laboring in vain with respect to the best cause and its divine Master. For myself, I am earnestly wishing to be much more cordially and zealously devoted in this most important direction. I have engaged to preach every Sunday afternoon, for some intermediate time, depending on circumstances, in a small meeting-house between here and Downend; to begin next Sunday. . . .

---

CXVIII. TO B. STOKES, ESQ.

*Stapleton, February 26, 1823.*

. . . . . Next opportunity I shall beg your acceptance of a copy of the new edition (just now about got through the press) of certain four essays. I should not think of offering you a thing of such worn-out interest, but just for the reason that this edition has undergone positively the last revisal that I shall ever give it. It may stand on your shelf simply in the quiet character of being, in a small degree, a better book than any former copy. The several editions since the second, have passed with perhaps hardly half a dozen corrections. This last cannot have received less than a *thousand*, though I give not the slightest hint of any such thing, to displease any purchaser of former editions. Most of these tinkering are utterly trivial; but some half a hundred of them, or more, are reconstructions of sentences, and attempts (in many of the instances successful ones, I believe), to bring out the lazy or clumsy meaning more distinctly. In some of the instances it is not that the sentence itself, taken separately, is better said, but the modification is meant to cure some little matter of incongruity or dissonance with its neighbors, which I detected in a severe examination. There is but very little enlargement, not probably the amount of twenty pages.

From little matters to great:—in what spirit do you at Worcester talk of the dreadful omens that are darkening over Europe? The omens, it is too probable, of as awful a commotion as ever convulsed it. In what

style do those famous Peace Society gentlemen talk of it? *What* do they say that the Spanish nation should do? But truly what signifies what they say? One does hope in Providence, that if *this* war is to rage, it will end in mightier prostrations of dominion than even Bonaparte accomplished, and of infinitely nobler tendency and result. . . .

---

CXIX. TO B. STOKES, ESQ.

*Near Haverfordwest, September 10, 1823.*

MY DEAR SIR,— . . . I have been more than a fortnight in this quarter, the coast of St. Bride's Bay, where the sea is clear of all fresh water modification, and the air is most pure and delightful since the fine weather set in. I expect some ten or twelve days more of it, having written to settle the omission of one of my appointed *lectures*, in order to prolong the time.\* I must then return from utter idleness to hard work, with a sort of pleasure to withdraw from *necessary* idleness, but with intense aversion to *necessary* labor; this latter feeling, partly owing to constitutional indolence, and partly to the miserable effect which hard labor latterly has on my health, to which a single week, or a single day,

\* "Do you honestly think that without any considerable awkwardness or *fuss* of explanation, the first appointment in the sequel of my lecture-services could be *rendered blank*? The case is this—that owing to rain every day, indisposition of some of the family in consequence of long and violent sea-sickness, and several other circumstances, I have been prevented, inevitably, from getting actually to the sea-side till this afternoon (we are to go thither this evening). To be back in Bristol against the 10th of September, I shall be reduced to the mere space of *one single week* at sea, a very incompetent length of time to derive much benefit, on the score of health, from the situation,—a circumstance which I had no cause to anticipate at the time I left Bristol. . . If one will be of any service, the addition of towards a fortnight more would obviously be a great amendment of the matter. Longer than so I should not stay, though there were no lecture engagement in the case. Nevertheless, I will cut off the time at the end of next week, or the beginning of the following, and be at the accustomed post if Dr. R. and you shall judge that the non-fulfilment of this one instance of the settled appointment would be really an impropriety. My dear sir, I may surely be confident, that you will not misapprehend this language. It is not, you will give me credit for it, that I am attaching any manner of *importance* to the *lecture itself*—done or omitted. The thing is, whether the previous public notice of such omission, the explaining of the cause to the circle of friends, &c, &c., would not seem far *too much ado* about the matter; whether it would not be like making an idle *fuss* about health, and so forth. You will I am sure, look at the case just as I am wanting you to look at it. I am sorry to have occasion to make such an application. Should the omission be thought allowable, you will not doubt my perfect readiness to perform the adjusted *number* of these services by a *lecture additional* after the close of the series and the year, if there shall be no resumption of these services for a following year. I may be allowed to take credit for not wishing to *filch* an exemption from any portion of the stipulated labor."—*Mr. Foster to the Editor*; dated *Haverfordwest, Aug. 29, 1823.*

of hard, mental exercise does sensible injury. And, unhappily, any mental labor is to me a hard business. It is always against the grain, and a business of dogged self-denial; especially anything in the *composition* way. I honestly believe I have never, at any one time, written the amount of a single page (of course, not including *letters*), without a painfully repugnant sense of toil; such a sense of it as *always* far more than to overbalance any sense of pleasure; and such as, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, quite to annihilate any such feeling of pleasure. . . .

I should have been very happy to have been spending these two fine weeks in the friendly society of Worcester. But S., as I have said, urged, in the most peremptory professional terms, "the sea, the sea," from which I do calculate on returning considerably the better. There have, however, been no excursions or adventures; for in a boat one would have little but sickness; and horses, this being harvest time, are hardly to be procured. An excursion, however, is intended a day or two hence, to that very interesting locality, the city of St. David's, so striking by its antiquities, and a solemn character of desolation, both in the town itself and the natural scenery around it. North Wales remains always on my fancy as a matter of anticipation, for one of these days, if life be prolonged. It cannot be so fine an adventure, in some respects, the next time, as the former one, now so long since past. Will there be a new and specific interest from the circumstance that we shall then be so much older?—that we shall then have so many years less for looking on the scenes of this world?—that we shall then be so much nearer the period for passing into *another* world, to see what there is *there*? Such a consideration would most certainly excite a pensive sentiment; but, at the same time, an animated and sublime one, if we are but conscious of being, in proportion to this approximation, the better prepared for the great transition. Let us, my dear sir, apply ourselves most earnestly and assiduously to this great purpose. Now that I have reached the fifty-third year of life, I am very often admonished and reminded of the decline of life. The mere *time* is such an admonition; and the indifferent health of the last two or three years is a strong and constantly returning reinforcement of it. . . .

---

CXX. TO JOSEPH COTTLE, ESQ.

*Tuesday Morning, 1823.*

MY DEAR SIR,—It will seem to you a little strange that I should send a letter to reach you within a few hours only of the time that I was to see you. And I am casting about to think of any adequate terms of apology in which I could introduce the letter as a substitute for myself. I will just say the simple truth. My excellent wife has suffered, during the preceding two days, a succession of peculiarly severe head-aches, which, though now gone by, have left her in a state of great languor and prostration. She does not often experience this complaint in anything

like the same degree ; but when it does attack her, it leaves for a while this consequence of extreme languor which necessarily very much affects her *spirits*, as well as that physical strength which is at all times but feeble.

Now, for several weeks past, between visits, preaching engagements, and tasks to be done in seclusion at home, I have very rarely passed a single evening in her company. And there is no other company *ever* that she can have in this place, except that of the two children ; at least, hardly ever. Just now her sister Cox is on a visit at a distance. This solitude naturally adds to the effect (it would in any case do so) of such a depression of spirits as that which these violent head-aches have temporarily caused. And making the case my own, I cannot help feeling that I should feel it somewhat hard to be just in that state, again left by the domestic associate the whole afternoon and evening, while that associate should go to be in great social interest elsewhere. The case being so, my dear sir, will not you, and my excellent friends your sisters, candidly accept this as an apology for my saying, that I hope you will allow me to exchange the appointment for my having the pleasure of dining with you to-day for an easy visit to take some of your tea, one of the evenings toward the end of the week ? I will allow myself to feel assured that you will so far excuse me. . . .

---

CXXI. TO THE REV. JOSIAH HILL.

*Stapleton, Nov. 11, 1823.*

. . . . . When you write, have the kindness to recite the curious anecdote about ———. Wishing to think well of him (as one does on the whole), one is not exactly pleased with that story about the *betting*. Still, however, one can deem such a thing not incompatible with being honest and in earnest about religion. In a buoyant, dashing, daring, wild spirit, there may be many things not so incompatible, which would yet appear very strange and exceptionable to sedate persons, of nicely regulated feelings and habits.

. . . . . In my last I intended to have mentioned that on and in the coach from Haverford, I met with a personage who signified, though in terms of some balancing and uncertainty, an intention to do the Methodists the honor of throwing his great force into their ranks. He had walked forward and was taken up a mile or two on the road ; and I heard the coachman's leering explanation to the guard, of whom this personage might be ; namely, a gentleman who had lately finished a two years' course in your jail, and was come out a flaming Christian and a preacher. A further explanation was, that a companion, who had walked with him so far on the road, and there parted in a most friendly style, was the very fellow that had just been tried and iniquitously acquitted at your assizes for plundering the miller. This apostle was in

the inside of the coach, and when I got in he was mighty forward, I thought, with his religious books and his religious talk (I being a perfect stranger to him). I somehow betrayed a hint of knowing who the young fellow, his companion, was; and then it came out in curious self-display, who he himself was; and I might have read I know not how many authentic testimonials to his conversion, his reformed character; and I did hear his own account of his highly popular acceptance and efficacy as a preacher. The people crowded and wept to hear him. His imprisonment, he said, was from a cause that did him no dishonor; though in other respects he had, he said, been a wild fellow. His being in such friendly company with that acquitted thief he accounted for on the score of his having been of some signal spiritual use to that thief's father. He *would* know to what religious class I might belong. Could I, even in such company, repress the vanity of saying, that my chief acquaintance, in that part of the country, was *with the Methodists*? He did them the honor to applaud them, and thought he should, after a little while, add himself to that noble class, evidently deeming that they ought and would make much of such an ally. He remained in the coach after I mounted the outside, and left it, if I remember, at Carmarthen. I well knew that shrewdness and discretion were at this time at the head of the Methodist Society at Haverford; and certainly wished that those qualities might not be put in abeyance in such a case. He may be a sincere convert (I should say might *then*, for by this time possibly he is completely the *reverse*), but he certainly had no right notion of the ground on which a man of his previous conduct ought, for some considerable time to stand. The coachman and guard gaily agreed that he might probably make an excellent trade of his new calling. . . .

---

CXXII. TO THE REV. JOSIAH HILL.

. . . . I am much interested and pleased with your account of friend John. There truly needed no such ceremony about inducing me to send him a letter. But I am a most incompetent adviser in anything about *literary* plans and pursuits. On other topics, of more general interest to a young man, I may have gained from experience, observation, and reflection, somewhat of wherewithal for counselling a new adventurer in life and the world. As to the question (for the next ensuing stage of his studies), between mathematics, and a still further occupation with the classics, it would, in my apprehension, turn very much on the estimate of the student's mental character. The mathematics, by all means, for a youth of excessive fancy, ardent sentiment, roving thought, and romantic propensity. To such an one, the sooner the better a process is applied for regulating, cooling, methodizing, consolidating the habits and operations of his mind. But, on the other hand, supposing his imagination and sentiment not yet fully developed; his

I should dwell on them, except with *specific* reference to influences and temptations from which your present situation may not be exempt. It is too well known, that in the literary and scientific institutions and society of Scotland, there is a very pervading spirit of scepticism and infidelity. I trust that your mind will be most carefully guarded against this mortal contamination, as well as against all that moral laxity to which it leads, and indeed, from which it very chiefly originates. I hope in heaven that your manhood will display a faithful and practical devotion to that which, from your infancy, you have been instructed to be the highest concern of life, and which very few are deluded and stupified enough at the *close* of life, not to acknowledge to have been so. How many at last so acknowledge it with grief, and even despair! . . .

---

CXXIV. TO THE REV. JOSIAH HILL.

*Stapleton, March 6, 1824.*

MY DEAR SIR,— . . . . The accident you heard of was three or four months since: it was slight, though it might have been serious. I was returning from one of the lectures with my sister-in-law, when, a little on this side the turnpike near Baptist Mills, some boy threw a squib or something of that kind across the road, just under the noses of the horses, which instantly started off with such impetuosity, that the reins broke in the man's hand. They took a sweep to the off-side of the road, so as to graze the carriage hard against the high wall, by which the carriage was much damaged, the windows broken, and a piece of the glass struck the side of my face, where a mark is made that will always remain. The man threw himself from the box, with the design to catch hold of one of the horses,—but was instantly left in the road, and they galloped on about half a mile, till they were some way up the long ascent of the Downend road, when they slackened to a slow pace at last, by which time the man rode up, and got before their heads on some horse which he had seized at the door of an inn. There was happily nothing on the road, to be either met or passed. My companion was not hurt at all, and the cut which I received, though of some depth, got well in two or three weeks. It was an occasion for specially acknowledging the care of a merciful Providence.

. . . . A few days since at Strong's I gave half-a-crown, I *did*, I really did, for an old octavo of Wesley on *Original Sin*; and through about a hundred pages which I have read, he seems to me to talk very much to the purpose; but what on such an estimate of human nature he could do with his Arminianism—his *sufficient power* in man—I cannot divine; perhaps he will make it all plain somewhere in the book, which I mean to read through, and perhaps more than once. . . .

## CXXV. TO THE REV. JOSIAH HILL.

Stapleton, Sept. 1, 1824.

. . . . The consequence of long idleness is such that I am mortified and astounded to find what a difficulty I have even to *understand* anything I attempt to read of a harder temper than friend Walter Scott's metaphysics. This very morning, in trying at a section of Lowman's "Rational of the Hebrew Ritual," I was obliged to go over the sentences again and again, before I seemed to obtain the smallest notion of what it was all about; and not being honestly able to ascribe the fault to the author, I was willing to divide the blame between myself, and the sluggish, soporific air and heat here. There is a prodigious difference of climate between here and St. Bride's Bay, unless indeed you have by this time experienced a very great change even there. A glorious season, however, for the harvest, which a few more days will complete hereabouts.

Among innumerable things wrong about us, there has, to-day, been at Downend, one thing right, namely, a *baptizing* of several persons, including a man of very great reading and research, brought up a churchman. There never was an instance, I believe, of more deliberate and conscientious conviction, followed out at the cost of an unmitigable hostility to be endured from his relatives, with whom his circumstances render it necessary for him at present to reside. A young clergyman, of the evangelical class, with whom he has been intimate, had nearly been betrayed into the same predicament, confessing explicitly that he felt ashamed and galled in his conscience in the act of sprinkling [infants], and calling it baptism; but most opportunely and luckily, he has been saved from plunging into the water by the intervention of a young lady of good fortune, and high church temperament.

## CXXVI. TO THE REV. JOSIAH HILL.

1824.

. . . . It occurs to me after each time of seeing you, to wonder how silent you are about the "Life of Richard" [Baxter]. I suspect you are by degrees giving up the design, any further than the compilation for Edwards's edition of the works. And to be sure, whenever one looks into any one of his polemical things, one thinks you are right. I do not see how less than a great part of a diligent life would suffice to make out any tolerable scheme and history of his opinions and controversies. And something of that sort would seem to be required, in a grand, comprehensive, well-digested, and final exhibition of his life and character. But to say nothing of the length of time this would take, where can mortal patience be found to work out such a historical analysis? And indeed, after all, what would be the benefit of it? A boundless, endless maze, and wilderness of debates, projectings, schemings, and dream-



ings, about churches, and their constitution and their government; about arrangements for union, and terms of communion;—the numberless polemical notices which he thought himself called upon to take of all the petty and spiteful cavillers of his time;—the hasty productions of an over-officious zeal to set everybody right about every actual or possible thing;—the attenuated, and infinitely multiplex argumentations, in the manner of the schoolmen, about trivial niceties in theological doctrine;—and above all, the ever-renewed and fruitless toils to work out a *tertium quid* from the impossible combination of two opposite systems of theology;—what, I repeat, would be the use of attempting to find or make a biographical road through this vast chaos? . . . .

---

CXXVII. TO THE EDITOR.

[On a MS. Translation of Pascal's Thoughts.]

1824.

MY DEAR SIR,—I trust you will excuse the bold liberty I have taken, in making so many exceptions and suggestions. I have done it as a kind of sample of the manner in which (*reviews* excepted) I have been accustomed to traverse my own matters of composition.

You will perceive, that I would sometimes adhere more exactly than you always do to the turn of expression in the original; but I cannot be at all sure, that a perfect master of both languages would not in some instances pronounce this punctilious and slavish. There is, however, so much of the *mind* of Pascal often shown in the very cast of his expression, that one would wish to keep as near it as possible. At the same time, there is here and there such a parsimony of words, and, we must even say, such an obscurity, as to make it indispensable for the translator to shape the sentence according to what he can *guess* of the meaning.

In many of the places which I have noted, you may see cause to retain your expressions as they stand, in preference to what I have ventured to suggest,—or to attempt some still different construction. Many such things are matters of individual taste. What is peculiarly to be avoided, in translating Pascal, is, all lengthy formality of phraseology: he is an admirable example of the contrary—of a simple, direct, *vital* manner of expression.

In any future portions, that you may wish me to see, I shall not trouble you with such frequent exceptions. Indeed, *self-indulgence* dictates to desist,—as I find that several whole days hardly suffice for this sort of examination of two or three sheets. I will only trouble you so far as to make, in passing, some slight note of indication where anything strikes me as particularly deserving of another trial of your mind and hand. Yours very truly,

J. F.

---

CXXVIII. TO THE REV. JOSIAH HILL.

Stapleton, Feb. 25, 1825.

. . . . I was pleased that your own acquaintance with Saunders, and

Catherine's with his daughter, contributed to give an interest to what I wrote respecting the latter. My interference in her case did not involve a great deal of what could strictly be called "painful." The warm regard entertained for each other by the preceptor and the pupil, and the pupil's candor, intelligence, and serious intentness on the great object, imparted quite a prevailing character of pleasure to the office, though necessarily it was a pleasure of a pensive quality. As my dear friend Catherine was well acquainted with Miss S., she will, I know, allow me to turn this event into an admonition, by just repeating one of the many things said by the young person, who now can speak no more. Within a short time of her death, she requested her favorite aunt, who was alone attending on her, to enforce it, as from her, on her younger sisters, "that they apply themselves to the great concern while,"—here she was stopped by cough and extreme difficulty of breathing, and her aunt finished the sentence for her by saying, "while in their youth." As soon as she recovered the power of speaking, she said, very pointedly, "No,—while in *their health*," signifying, that that was a more uncertain, and might be a much more transient thing, than even their youth. To me, this concern and its departed object will be an interesting remembrance as long as I live.

. . . . The late grand parliamentary debate,—did you take any considerable interest in that huge contest? It was the most athletic strife that has occurred for many years past, in that St. Stephen's prize-ring. We here read almost the entire of the four nights' debate, as given at vast length in the *Times* paper. We admired exceedingly the mighty power and promptitude of mind displayed by the great chiefs in the warfare. Plunkett's speech was a fine exhibition of large and commanding intellect; Tierney's, the happiest possible rally of keen exposure and satiric ridicule. For fierce, vengeful, and irresistible assault, Brougham stands forth the foremost man, I take it, in all this world. It is exquisitely gratifying to see how his javelins fly at the time-servers and the scoundrels. . . . .

---

CXXIX. TO THE EDITOR.

1825.

MY DEAR SIR,—If the alternative were to be hanged, I could make you no satisfactory answer. Be thankful that you are not in my shoes. "Work double tides!" I feel at this very hour so unwell that I cannot work at all; so that I have been forced to relinquish a subject that I had thought a little of for Thursday's lecture, and must have recourse to the expedient of vamping up an old sermon for the purpose.

I now feel that it will be totally impossible for me to do anything at all, of any kind, for Pascal; anything that could be completed within less than *three months*, at the least. I am not more sure that I am writing these lines, than that I should utterly sink under any attempt at forcing

myself to write at the rate of so much or anything near so much, as *one printed page per day*. This is no pretence or evasion. I never write as much as one such page of composition, properly so called, without becoming faint and sickly. My knees have literally trembled under me all this day, in consequence of rather a hard effort during part of the preceding day. When I do *nothing* for a while, I, like a child, forget to anticipate how the case will be when I really shall endeavor to do something. And in such a season I innocently say, I hope to do so and so; and thus I was betrayed to fancy I could do something for Pascal, perhaps by the time of *your* completion of the undertaking.\* But when I *do* attempt anything, then comes again the old consequence, and my wonder at myself that I could have been so thoughtless, so little taught by experience, as to expect and engage to do anything. I deplore both my imbecility (of body and mind), and my folly in making any kind of engagements in forgetfulness of my past miserable experience. . . . It is the plain, unfortunate truth that I *cannot* write, otherwise than a very small paragraph or two, at long intervals; that is, cannot without being made quite ill.

As to Doddridge, after throwing aside two or three several little lots of material, which, in succession, I had meant for that article, I am trying to do something in a different way; and am doing most tamely and inefficiently. . . . I had better have proceeded with what I was at first, or at second, about; for then it would have been done long since. But it is of no use even to reproach myself. . . .

---

CXXX. TO THE REV. JOSIAH HILL.

*April, 1825.*

MY DEAR SIR,—. . . I am sometimes very much disposed to murmur that the little I *can* do towards any sort of usefulness being entirely in the intellectual way, the doing it should be so slow, and irksome, and painful, and even physically injurious, an operation. Some of the workmen in the thinking-shop can do about their best with a great degree of facility and despatch; can bring thoughts and put them into sentences about twenty times as fast as I ever could. In my case, old *practice* has not given the smallest advantage in point of facility. Rather, I think, of the two, it has left the business still more slow and laborious than even formerly; so that my aversion to the employment has continually increased. And yet something like a *sense* of duty to be trying at it has continued to haunt and disturb me. But advancing age, and invincible ill health (a health which suffers *peculiarly* under this kind of labor), certify me that I can never now accomplish much. I will console myself with hoping that what has been done, with any little more that I may be

\* The translation of Pascal's Thoughts, referred to in this and a preceding letter (p. 42), has since been published, with an Introductory Essay by Mr. Isaac Taylor.

able to do, will not leave me altogether under the censure of having lived in vain.

Notwithstanding the fatiguing employment I have mentioned,\* I was tempted, after I saw you last, to impose on myself a little extra task,—that of putting in the shape of a paragraph or two, for my next letter to your worship, the topic of our debate that evening in Mrs. F——’s parlor; not so much, however, on *your* account (you are, I verily believe, nearly of the same opinion), but to aid my own wretched memory, by collecting into a narrow space,—into a focus, as it were, the particulars constituting the argument. Partly from having, unfortunately, always declined the hardship of disciplining my thoughts to system and method, and partly from this miserable want of memory, the case is with me, that whenever I attempt to argue a point, I have always to cast about to think of something *at the time*,—always to begin anew, much as if I had never discussed the matter before. To be sure, if there be *any* question, for the disposal of which there are obvious and plentiful resources at hand anywhere, at any time, independently of such previous adjustment of the materials of argument, it is that respecting your notable Arminian tenet of a *sufficient grace and power* (I suppose I may so express it), in possession of all men for their conversion. Yet I think, I will, one of these days, try to put in the fewest words, *the appeal to fact*. And then I shall have nothing to do next time, but to amuse myself in observing the manner in which you play and quirk about, in attempting to maintain a point of the Methodist creed which you do not believe, but dare not disown. . . . .

---

CXXXI. TO THE REV. JOSIAH HILL.

Stapleton, June 10, 1825.

. . . . You may chance to have heard or seen some newspaper notice of Dr. Ryland’s death. After several months of slow and gradual deterioration, he sank very rapidly during the last two or three weeks. He was sensible to the end; but was so oppressed by debility and laborious breathing during the last few days, that, to the regret of his friends, he was unable to hold any material communications with them. Most of what he said was in the form of pious ejaculation, mingled with the natural expressions of suffering. The funeral was very solemn in *effect*, as well as show. The public exercise was shared by Hughes, Birt, and Roberts. Hall yielded to the “church’s” solicitation, to come to preach the funeral sermon last Sunday. It ended with a long and eloquent eulogium of Dr. R., conceived with great discrimination, and not much exaggerated. He has consented to publish it. Dr. R. was, indeed, a most admirable man in all sorts of goodness. You hope his “*creed* has been pardoned him.” If it needed pardon, it was a sin; and I do not see

\* Essay to Doddridge’s Rise and Progress.

how we are to hope for the pardon of *sin not repented of and renounced*. In this predicament was the guilt of Dr. R. as to his creed. I assure you he did not, he really did not, chant, by way of recantation, the pious and humble strain of one of the sweet singers of your Israel,—

“Take back my interest in the Lamb,  
Unless the Saviour died for all.”

. . . . I suppose you will be here a week, at least, at the conference time. . . . I like you Methodists better, probably, than does any other so sterling a Calvinist.

---

CXXXII. TO THE EDITOR.

Stapleton, Oct., 1825.

. . . . Almost every time I have seen the old *enemy* in Clare Street, he has expressed his regret at the loss of you. In a similar way to what is sometimes seen in other beasts of prey, he seems to have undergone that queer change of feeling, that instead of regarding you as something to be devoured, he has come to feel all the dispositions of a friend. *Myself* I fear he regards still in the old natural relation, for latterly he has once and again bitten, and with no gentle and playful use of the fangs. Some notion of the ferocity and violence, and of the painful, and costly, and tedious process of cure (if ever cured), may be formed from the naming of such things as Brunck's Sophocles, Burmann's Ovid, Milton's book, Schleusner's Lexicon (the new 4to. edit.), Lizars's Anatomy, not to mention a number of minor things. I hesitated and demurred, wished myself a hundred leagues out of the way of the temptation, was self-admonished and self-reproached, but—but—the two fine classics might never offer themselves so favorably again—of the 4to. Schleusner there, were but few copies (professedly) printed, and the larger type was very desirable; Milton's book was expressly bespoken before the scandalous exorbitance of the price was known, or could be anticipated; and Lizars's—I was for the moment just simply insane, for the pleasure of having just got out of the Glasgow job. and thinking what a considerable (to me considerable) handful of pence I should get for having done it. But verily, I not only *mean* to sin no more at any such rate, or anything approaching to it, but *believe* I never shall. Literally my blood is kept warm by my being mad every day, ten times a day, to see the costly and (to me) useless piles and ranges of them about this room; to think what money has thus for twenty years been swallowed in an unproductive substance; in many parts of it now vastly depreciated; in the finer articles of it constantly subject to injury from damp and sundry other causes; the whole destined, one of these days, to the auctioneer's hammer, with a vast loss; and the whole foolish process of accumulation having actually and literally kept me all the time in a difficulty, not seldom a hard one, of making “both ends meet.” This last evil has sometimes

been so sensible, that, if my good wife were not the most indulgent woman, about, in England, I should have heard lectures, many and long, and pronounced in no middle-voice emphasis. Besides all which, it has a thousand times occurred to me, with no gentle reproach of conscience, how much good, absolute and certain, and of the best kinds, might have been done by the expenditure in charity of but a minor part of what a rigid domestic economy has left it just possible to divert to the useless operation of amassing never-to-be-read books. My dear sir, I have gone into this mortifying self-exposure with an honest wish to warn you against such folly. We have often made smart pleasantry of the subject, but really and truly I am this time quite serious and in earnest to warn you of the danger, and against the *guilt*; for that I feel to be the right word in my own case. A man of very narrow means, as mine have always been (contrary to what I have heard is sometimes reputed), has no *moral right* to indulge so expensive a taste. *Taste*, I have said; for with me it has never been in the smallest degree vanity or ostentation, nor any passion or fancy for *making a library*, but merely the attraction, individually and in detail, of one fine or valuable book, and then another.

About the Glasgow job I have not heard or seen one word since I sent, some month or six weeks since, the concluding pages of MS. . . . Whenever it comes to my hands, I shall be afraid to look into it, from the strong impression I have in its disfavor; it having been *all* written *invidiâ Minerva* (as was once the phrase), and the sight of the proof-sheets not having at all brightened my previous estimate. It was a doleful sojourn in an indefinite region of common-place.

---

CXXXIII. TO B. STOKES, ESQ.

*Stapleton, Jan. 3, 1826.*

. . . . Another thing has occurred to me, before I could write two lines, namely, that since I was with you, you will have had very different concerns on your hands from any little matters of manuscripts and books, that is, the frightful disorder and crash in the commercial and financial system. It is quite dreadful to hear of the extent and depth of the disaster from every side. And it is too much to hope that you will not, in spite of the general caution and safety of your management, have incurred some portion of a mischief so widely spread, and affecting every place. All I can venture to hope is, that your share may be comparatively small, even among those Welsh, whose banks (a number of them) will have been swept down by the torrent. . . . It is truly a wretched state of things, to have been suddenly fallen into by a nation which was beginning to exult in its returning prosperity, which was boasted of by its governors as surpassing almost all former example. But that such a catastrophe could take place, proves the prodigious rot-

tenness of the system, and that some such event was really quite necessary to happen, to prevent the concealed mischief from becoming wider and more pernicious still. As to the country banks especially, it has long struck the apprehensions of every man of sense, that their endless multiplication, without check or known limits to their issue, was a most flagrant mischief to the community; not only as putting property everywhere in hazard, but as continually affecting and falsifying the very *standard of value* throughout the nation. At a heavy cost, a great ultimate benefit will have been gained by the breaking up of this vile system, and by the discredit and intimidation which will, for a long time, prevent the possibility of its renewal, to anything approaching to the same iniquitous extent.

---

CCXXXIV. TO THE REV. JOSIAH HILL.

*Stapleton, March 22, 1826.*

MY DEAR SIR,—It is most distressing to hear what James has suffered, and to think what it is too probable he is suffering still. And I can in a measure, but truly in a very imperfect one, conceive what Mrs. Hill and you must have suffered in apprehension, and in the most painful sympathy. How little (it has often occurred to my thoughts) was so melancholy a dispensation anticipated in the lively and delightful days and weeks which I spent with your family at Little Haven, with James, as one of the most animated and animating spirits in the society! while every hope, of both his affectionate relatives and his admiring friend, calculated on him as rising up with the finest endowments, to be an enlightened and estimable man, and to act a valuable and honorable part in this mortal life; and most unwilling am I to admit the feeling, that the saying this is an implication that such hope is to be surrendered. I still remember there is *One* with whom “all things are possible;” and, at the same time you, my dear sir, and my dear and most excellent friend, Mrs. Hill, have the most firm and assured belief, that this almighty and infinitely beneficent Power will do all things right. If it should be the heavenly Father's good pleasure, that you are thus prematurely to lose the object of so much affection and fond anticipation, you know he has such reasons for it, that if they could be fully and intelligibly revealed to you, you would say, with cordial acquiescence, “It is well; thy will be done!” You *know* that this is so. Think what an inestimable blessing it is, in affliction, to know this for an absolute truth,—to know, that if you could have God's own wisdom to judge of the entire case, you would will exactly what he, in the issue of his present dispensation, will manifest that he has willed. . . .

It is consolatory to hear that, under his long and severe sufferings, he has displayed a submission and patience worthy of one who knows he is in the hands of a wise and merciful Disposer. I hope he will receive every consolatory aid, to sustain him through whatever that sovereign

Disposer has appointed yet to await him : and I pray, and confidently trust in the divine mercy, that this most painful discipline may be made most salutary, infinitely so, to the immortal spirit, whether the Lord of life and death has determined to restore him to health or to call him to his presence. I would be most affectionately remembered to him, with every expression of the kindest sympathy, and every wish for his welfare. How little, alas ! can all such expressions do to alleviate affliction like his ! but I pray that he may enjoy the favor of Him who can alleviate all suffering and sorrow, and turn them into a cause of joy here and hereafter. I can only wish you and Mrs. Hill the support and blessing of the same almighty Friend, a resource of which you know by experience the value. I would be most kindly remembered to my friend Catherine, and to our friend John, when you write to him. My good wife's wishes are to express her most friendly sympathy and kindest regard. Our boy is still in a delicate, precarious state, but rather a little, we hope, mending. I cannot urge you to write to me in the midst of so much care, and with all your diversified public business also pressing on your time ; you know what a welcome thing it will be to hear from you, whenever you *can* divert a little time and composure to such an occupation.

Yours, with the greatest regard,

J. FOSTER.

---

CXXXV. TO THE REV. JOSIAH HILL.

*Stapleton, May, 1826.*

MY DEAR SIR,—I will presume there is no need of professions to the effect that, “ this long silence has in no degree partaken of forgetfulness, indifference,” &c. : no ; it has been owing to a paralytic affection of my right hand,—an affection, however, which I never feel, but when I should take, or attempt to take, a pen. In such a case, there is some mysterious arrest on its power ; but lay down or let alone the pen, and I should not be sensible that anything at all ails the limb. There are, nevertheless, rare and unaccountable intervals of this peculiar disorder ; and I seize one of them to make an essay at this sheet.

The information respecting friend James has been, on the whole, more favorable than previous accounts had led me to fear the sequel was to prove. And I am indulging an assurance that the advancing fine season is every week bringing some small, but valuable and promising addition to his recovery toward health. Nothing, at the same time, but such a fatality as I have been lamenting would have prevented me from long since writing for information, and in acknowledgment of your last friendly, brief communication, as well as the preceding one. The envelope of the newspaper was legible but in part. I could make out that you still felt great anxiety respecting James ; and it so happened that some lines on the topic of laudations conferred on a certain “ Essay,” were as clearly visible as ever was Ballantyne's typography, just as if



an evil spirit had taken the trouble to preserve conspicuously the sentence adapted to cherish in me the evil principle of vanity. To be praised by "heads of houses," by college tutors, and by poets! do you not think it was worth while to take some pains in finishing the composition,—that care of elaboration on which you have sometimes condescended to confer your rather scornful compassion? As a set-off, however, to such fume of Arabia, there has not been, as far as I am aware (with the single exception of old friend the Eclectic), one word of notice in any of the hundred printed vehicles of contemporary criticism. You will believe me, I hope, that I have no manner of quarrel with any of them on this account. I am about beginning to try whether I can do another small piece of work for the same employers. They fancy that I have been at it for a considerable time; and I have been too much ashamed of my dilatoriness to undeceive them. . . .

I should like vastly to know the whole in and out of your Liverpool station; I mean as to how it accommodates itself to the dispositions, habits, tastes, and likings of Mr. and Mrs. Hill. I have noticed how very taciturn you are on this whole subject. And my faith or presumption in the matter is inclined to coincide with that of some of your Bristol friends; that is to say, that Mr. and Mrs. H. do not like Liverpool at all. They (the Bristol friends) are beginning (or they pretend so) to be looking forward toward the time when the solemn and inviolable laws of the "Celestial Empire" (for the Methodists are the Chinese of the Christian tribes), will permit our old friends to take the other turn in the Bristol station. It is unfortunate, that you cannot come just at this juncture to preserve the perfect integrity of this province of that empire,—to prevent some threatened desertions across its sacred confine, perpetrated under the influence of the attraction of Broadmead. Mr. —, I am told, is renegade. . . . Mrs. — told me lately, that much as she is sorry and reluctant to act in contravention to her worthy husband's will, she shall often be a defaulter in ecclesiastical allegiance. . . . Hall appears to be highly satisfied, and even gratified, with his transfer. By degrees one has come to understand the combination of motives which determined him; no one of them being singly very strong, but the whole together rationally competent to account for and justify the measure. Excepting two or three Sundays occupied in preaching, I have heard him each Sunday evening, the evening being, I understand, generally the superior part of the day. And certainly, whatever it be in point of religious profit, it is a high intellectual luxury; though under a material deduction on account of the difficulty of hearing him. Besides the lowness and thickness of his voice, he does, I am sure, and many say the same, articulate more indistinctly than formerly. . . . The place is kept full (often not violently crowded), by a very miscellaneous, and partly occasional influx from the Church, Methodists, Quakers, Independents, and no-kind; a few Socinians to complete the compost. Several clergymen regularly; lately an archbishop; members of parliament over from the spiritual sojourn at

Bath; and so forth. As to the *archbishop*, I should affix the epithet *Irish*, or you will not believe me. Hall takes possession this week of his house; one of a great number of newly built ones on the road, half a mile on this side Bristol: which house is, during the morning part of the day, to be defended against assault by (if found necessary), culverins, carronades, chevaux de frise, bull-dogs, and what not. But I predict, that there will not be found wanting British valor enough, not unfrequently to dare and overcome all these means and modes of fortification and menace. . . . Anderson (on easy terms with Hall for many years) will be far more of an intimate with him than any other man. He is a vastly acute and doggedly intellectual fellow, that Anderson, and is intrepid enough not to have the slightest fear of the great man. I stand greatly in awe of him, but shall sometimes venture within reach of his talons, which are certainly of the royal tiger kind. . . . He seems on the whole (for he has not escaped feelings of approaching infirmity, in addition to his old and invincible complaint), in a state of health to promise many years; years it may be hoped of great and peculiar usefulness—peculiar, inasmuch as he will draw under his influence a large portion of the most intelligent part of the people about the place, especially of the class of young, inquisitive, educated folk, many of them apt to be proud or vain of their attainments, and liable to temptation on the side of Socinianism or scepticism. . . .

---

CXXXVI. TO THE REV. JOSIAH HILL.

*August 2, 1826.*

MY DEAR SIR,—At last I put an end to this procrastination, for which it is of no use to say, that I am sorry and ashamed. Nor would I pretend the smallest excuse from the circumstance of having been for a month past, and more, severely tasked with compulsory labor, for a temporary purpose, since a few sentences would have expressed my deep and sympathizing interest in your sorrows. But in truth I have wanted resolution. I have felt how impotent must be all testimonies of friendly concern in so mournful a juncture. I know that the divine Friend alone can be an effectual consoler, and his consolations I rejoiced in the certainty that you enjoyed, and would still further enjoy.

About, I think, a month since, Mrs. F—— kindly sent me a letter she had received from Mrs. Hill, which contained a most friendly reference to me. It was affecting to contemplate that bright and interesting youth in the state of debility, prostration, and suffering which she described. But how much I rejoiced, and with feelings of congratulation to his affectionate and sorrowing parents, at another part of [the letter] in which his piety, his patience, his entire resignation . . . were so delightfully displayed. What inestimable consolation to his affectionate friends! The letter showed his exhaustion to be so extreme, that I anticipated his almost immediate dismissal from the scene of suffering, and felt some

surprise at your letter which informed me he was still detained. And I was exceedingly struck with the memorable circumstance of his pointed and solemn appeal and questions to his brother. Such an explicit manifestation, such a prominence of Christian principle and faithfulness, was worthy of a spirit just ready for its flight into eternity—into heaven. At the same time, it could not but be a pensive gratification to me, that anything of my writing should be implicated with this impulse of pious avowal, and zeal, and fraternal affection. You requested me to write. My dear sir, pardon me that I delayed, till the second letter with a black seal brought the evidence, that all your feelings would be for a while sacred to the dead and to heaven.

I seem as if I could hardly believe it for a fact, that my animated young friend will be seen no more on earth. If I were at Little Haven, every spot would give back his image to my mind, with a frequent return of the suggestion, "Will he not come? Why is he not here?" I can imagine that there would at moments be something almost like a prompting impulse to go and look for him, along the shore, or on the brow of the cliff. How vivid is my remembrance (it looks not like remembrance but presence),—of his elastic spirit, his illuminated look, his keen argument! in all which we seemed to foresee, in more advanced future years, a man of extraordinary and admirable intelligence, conspicuously superior to surrounding society, and, as we hoped, destined to be, somewhere or other, its light and benefactor. But the great Sovereign had a different appointment! And he who was your interesting associate, and so often mine, is now in the invisible world, and among the spirits of the just made perfect. That this was a wise and gracious appointment you are sure, amidst all the regrets which oppress your hearts, and for the present cast a shade over the whole scene of life. He who cannot err, and who could have bid him stay on earth, judged it better to say to him, "Come up hither;" and how happy that the youthful spirit was willing and prepared to go! And think how delightfully, how divinely complacent he is in the change! Assuredly, if he might *return*, he would say, with heavenly emotion, "No, my heavenly Father, no; not from thy presence, for all the world below." But you will feel irresistible assurance, that he thinks of you still, with sweet and never-dying affection, and anticipates the time when you will go to meet him, where you will never more lose him.

In Mrs. Hill's letter, it was extremely gratifying to see the pious resignation with which she was enabled to surrender to the Almighty the dear departing youth. I have often admired the calm fortitude of so gentle a spirit, and have thought how much cause she had to bless God for the possession of the supporting power of religion. That power I trust you will both effectually feel in this trying season. And also, that every consoling, and every salutary and instructive, influence will be granted to operate on the minds of my young friends, John and Catherine. They have, perhaps, never before had placed before them so plain

and affecting a practical demonstration of the necessity and sacred efficacy of religion.

With respect to your very kind invitation to Little Haven, I will just mention the state of the case. On account chiefly of John's health, my dear wife has been with him, and the two younger at Lyme, on the south coast, this six or seven weeks, and I have never seen them all the while. . . . For more than a month I have been in hard labor in writing a great deal in various shapes, about our academy, in the way of statements and applications sent to various quarters to promote its interest, &c., so that a number of other matters of labor have been thrown into grievous arrear, and require to be now attended to. Happily, my wife's sister C. is with them, or it would have been imperative on me to visit them; for the situation of things is but a mournful one. In one word, we have little reason to expect any other than a fatal termination of John's long indisposition. It is decidedly consumption, and he is reduced to very great debility and emaciation, and has an ominous cough. He has been gradually growing worse during the last half year. My dear wife is a woman of the most pensive feelings, though with all the fortitude of reason, aided by religious thought. But I fear for her oppressed spirits. Now, my dear sir, the case being so, I feel that if I *can* leave home a week or two, it is to Lyme that I ought to go. They would feel there the claim, while regarding you with the very highest esteem, and taking, as my wife does, a very warm and sympathetic interest in your sorrows and loss. . . .

---

CCXXXVII. TO THE REV. W. ANDERSON.

1826.

MY DEAR SIR,—I was pleased to hear you say that you had not a Tacitus, of such an edition as to content you; but vexed afterwards that I should then and there have said one syllable of intimation that you did not need purchase one—as being sensible, the next moment, it might look so much like an air of having such affluence of books as to be able to turn them to the effect of *conferring favors and gratuities*. In very truth it was said from the momentary eager impulse to prevent your doing what you said you were intending, that is, to procure a Tacitus. The idea of the instant was, that you might be turning in at Strong's for that purpose, the first time that you should be going that way.

There needs not one word be said about this second Brotier's edition, edited by himself, with some additions to what was in his quarto, and at the same time some omissions of what he thought less essential. Several years since (though previously possessed of Valpy's reprint), I was tempted by the known character and the beauty of this, together with the fairness of the copy. There was another inducement:—I anticipated the need of two good copies for the purpose of, probably, sometimes reading a book of Tacitus with the youth—who will soon read no more. I

do not wish to retain in view what would be the constant memorial of this vanity and fallacy of hope.

It was with a melancholy sentiment that I lately took up-stairs and placed on the shelf a volume of Livy, a considerable part of which he had read with me during the earlier period of his fatal decline. I looked at the part bearing the marks of his having proceeded through it, and thought with deep pensiveness,—“he will never more look on these passages and sentences.”

The Tacitus, I observe, I have long since taken the pains to preserve fit for use without binding, by pasting thin boards on the sides, pasting a strip of strong cloth, and covering it, across each top and bottom, and writing the inscription on the back. I like extremely the *foreign* look of this sort of paper-outside.

It may some time or other occur that a tolerable *Latin Dictionary* will be of opportune service to a student in the Academy, who may be ill able to afford the cost of the necessary books. Of three or four such I can well spare one, which you will please to make this use of whenever you may be aware of the proper occasion.

The Delphin Cæsar, too, as not furnishing any such help as to favor indolence, and as not being in any great degree incorrect, may in some instance or other be worth putting in the hands of such a student. I observe I have *Livie's* neatly printed Horace 12mo., but with no notes at all—if this should be a thing of any use, I can at any time put it in my pocket.

Yours truly,

J. FOSTER.

#### CXXXVIII. TO HIS SON.

[Written to him when at Lyme, about two months before his consumption ended in death, on the 5th of Oct., 1836. J. F.]

MY DEAR JOHN,—For some weeks I have had the intention of writing you a letter, and have been afraid my so long omitting to do so would seem hardly kind. The prevention has been from a considerable quantity of other writing of a labored and tedious kind, together with many calls into society which I could not well avoid. But I think of you every day and hour. There has not been much hereabouts worth telling you, more than what I have mentioned in the successive letters to your mother; unless, indeed, it had been possible to convey the essence of the admirable sermons of Mr. Hall, which I have heard each Sunday evening. It is the regret of all hearers that that essence, so noble, should go off, and as it were expire, and be lost, like incense dissipated in the air;—lost, that is to say, except as far as it is admitted and retained for salutary effect in the minds of some of those hearers. Whether it be so retained in any of them, is known only to themselves and the omniscient Inspector. Last Sunday evening (the text being in Ecclesiastes, “There is a time for every purpose,” &c.), he made his conclusion, with

extreme energy, in urging on young persons the absolute necessity of an instant, earnest attention to their highest interests, with perhaps *ten* repetitions of the question, "Is it too soon?" followed, in each sentence, with the most cogent and solemn representation *why* it is *not* too soon. One could have wondered, while listening, how it was possible that any of the young persons present, of anything approaching to mature years and understanding, could put aside at the time the force of the admonition, or go away and think no more of it. I wonder, my dear John, what *you* would have thought, and how you would have felt, if you had been there. He enforced that in season of *health* "it is time," that no time is to be lost;—with what augmented emphasis he might have added, that when health has given place to sickness, there is *then*, with still more pressing and invincible evidence, *no time to be lost*.

My imagination is often with you, and the little company, in your dwelling and its vicinity, which are so familiar to my mental view. The most conspicuous and favorite part, that is the *Cobb*, is now, I suppose, easily practicable as a little walk to any who are in possession of a little share of strength. At every thought of that, and of the more distant shore where the relics of unknown past ages so much abound, I am greatly sorry that you cannot repeat the little rambles thither which pleased you so much last year. I regret to think how painfully you must feel the difference, especially when you observe the two younger associates capable of their former activity and amusement. You have to exercise patience in being content with what you *can* enjoy of the scene, under the restriction of your present weakness, by sitting on the beach, floating sometimes, it seems, on the sea in a boat, and looking from the windows on the great expanse, with often a beautiful sky and horizon, a splendid sun-setting, and, some time since, the rising moon; which last I never saw with a more beautiful and striking appearance than I remember once at Lyme.

It has been pleasing to hear of any degree of alleviation which you have seemed to feel of your disorder; and very glad should I have been to hear of a more decided amendment. It has been well, and to me at the same time wonderful, that the heat, oppressive to all that I have met with except Dr. Marshman, has been so much attempered to your feelings. I would hope its continuance will be favorable to your regaining some little increase of strength against the season which the now sensibly shortening days are beginning to signify we must be again looking for. You have to acknowledge it as a favor of Providence, that you are thus permitted to have the trial of the best expedient that could be recommended for arresting the progress of your disease, together with such constant alleviating attentions, cares, and exemptions, while an incomparably greater number, who are suffering under such debility, are at the same time in circumstances of hardship, deprivation, and want. Think of them, if you are sometimes tempted to murmur at your lot. But do not let your thoughts be confined to the consideration of health, and the

means and wishes for its recovery. I would earnestly and affectionately press it upon you that there is a far superior concern requiring your attention. I have never written to you, I think, without reminding you of this. But in such former admonitions I was far from anticipating that the time would come so soon when suggestions of the most serious kind would acquire such new and, I may say, importunate force of application, from an extremely critical state of your health. By your invariable silence on this subject, and apparent care to avoid being brought into communication respecting it, I have always been left, and I believe your mother also, much in the dark as to what place it has held in your thoughts. I have feared to urge it upon you with formal, grave, and frequent repetition, lest such admonition should become repulsive to you, and so have the effect of making you disinclined to think or read on the subject. And knowing how much religious instruction, direct and indirect, has mingled through the whole course of your education, and being certain, therefore, that you must necessarily have much *information* on the subject, I have been willing to hope that you did sometimes think of it seriously, though reluctant to speak of it. How *could* I when you had so much knowledge, and when your mental faculties were advancing toward maturity,—how could I do otherwise than hope that you must be sensible what is the grand dictate of reason, of wisdom, of good sense; and were secretly giving some real attention to the greatest concern of existence? And if you did it in a measure when in health, I may surely hope that you do it still more seriously *now*. For, my dear John, you can hardly be unaware that your situation is exceedingly precarious, not only as to the recovery of health, but as to life itself. Your friends would not willingly, in your state of weakness and languor, distress you with pre-sages; but it is proper you should be unequivocally apprised that the case is one of great danger, while it is a well-known fact that the disorder is peculiarly deceptive to the patients themselves, as to their anticipations of the issue.

What then, my dear boy, is your most evident, most demonstrative, duty and interest? Is there not an irresistible appeal to your reason and conscience? The voice of your heavenly Father himself speaks to you. Surely you will not be inattentive to his admonitions and merciful invitations. Can the voice of the kindest human friend, or the voice from heaven itself, express to you a kinder or wiser sentence, than that you should apply yourself with all earnestness to secure the true felicity—the only real and substantial felicity on earth, supposing your life should be prolonged,—the supreme felicity of a better world, if the sovereign Disposer has appointed that your life shall be short.

Do not allow your thoughts to recoil from the subject as too solemn, too gloomy a one. If it *were* the gloomiest in the world, if it were nothing *but* gloomy, it is yet *absolutely necessary* to be admitted, and dwelt upon in all its importance. What would be *gained*, my dear John, and oh, what may be lost! by avoiding it, turning the thoughts from it, and

trying not to look at it? Will the not thinking of it make it *cease* to be urgently and infinitely important? Will the declining to think of it secure the safety of the momentous interests involved in it? But *why* should the subject be gloomy? Is it a sad and melancholy thing to seek earnestly the favor and beneficence of God? Is it a miserable employment to seek his pardoning mercy in the name of Jesus Christ? Is it a mournful exercise to seek to have the mind brought into the right state, in all respects, towards God, and religion, and futurity, and heaven? Can it be a gloomy thing to seek a deliverance from the very *gloom itself* which naturally accompanies our ideas of death, so that we should come to exult in the thought and anticipation of an endless life? If there *be* gloom in the subject, you plainly see there is no way to escape it but by either, on the one hand, hardening the mind to an invincible thoughtlessness, which leads to the most fatal consequences, or, on the other hand, a firm and pious resolution fully to *meet* that gloominess, and seek the divine assistance to pass through it, to overcome it, and attain a state of hope and consolation.

This was done by James Hill, of whose decease your mother has perhaps informed you. He was just your own age, within some very few weeks; and a year or two since had the most flattering prospects of life and distinction before him. He was not *then* insensible to the claims of religion, but did not yield his attention to them in the degree that he subsequently felt, with the deepest conviction, that he ought to have done. But his protracted illness (a slow consumption) was a salutary discipline to bring him to the most earnest concern for his immortal welfare; he sought the divine mercy, believing in the many promises that none shall truly, humbly, and perseveringly, through Jesus Christ, seek it in vain. He obtained a happy confidence in that mercy, and was perfectly resigned to the sovereign will for life or death.

Do not, my dear John, doubt that your prayers also will be graciously heard. We shall not cease to pray for you; but the great, the *indispensable* thing is, that you pray for *yourself*. It must be your *own* serious and persevering effort. And is it not a supremely valuable and happy resource? Think of being permitted and invited to make your petitions to the almighty Father, the God of all grace! And think, deeply and deliberately, of your situation, in body and spirit, to judge what you have to request of him. Such reflection will show you plainly what is of infinitely the greatest importance to you. Make *that*, above all, the subject of an humble and hopeful importunity. Do so, my dear John, and then you will be happy, whether your life shall be prolonged, or prematurely brought to a conclusion.

Your affectionate father,

J. FOSTER.

---

CXXXIX. TO THE REV. JOSIAH HILL.

*Stapleton, Aug. 29, 1826.*

. . . . In one point I have a principle of consolation, real, and I think



surely rational, though indeed of a gloomy kind. I may have alluded to it in some former letter. It is, that I constantly and systematically regard this world with such horror, as a place for the rising human beings to come into, that it is an emphatical satisfaction, I may say pleasure, to me (except in a few cases of rare promise), to hear of their prematurely leaving it. I have innumerable times been amazed that parents should not, in this view, be greatly consoled in their loss. Let them look at this world! with sin, temptations, snares of the devil, bad examples, seducing companions, disasters, vexations, dishonors, and afflictions, all over it; and their children to enter the scene with a radically corrupt nature, adapted to receive the mischief of all its worst influences and impressions; let them look at all this, and then say, deliberately, whether it be not well that their children are saved these dreadful dangers! Let them behold what the *vast majority* of children *do* actually become—*have* actually become, in mature life;—many of them, millions of them! decidedly bad and wretched, and causes of what is bad and wretched around them; and, short of this worst event, an *immense* majority of them careless of religion, salvation, eternity! I repeat, let them look at all this, and then ask themselves, whether it be not a vain presumption that exactly *their* children, nay, *every* parent in his turn, *my* children, are sure to be exceptions. Alas, how many even *pious* parents have cause (humanly speaking) to wish their children had never been born, or that they had died in their infancy! How often are they doomed to the sadness of seeing that the effect of all their cares of teaching and discipline, all they have done to warn and fortify them, is lost and destroyed in one short year, or even *month*, under the influence of the bad companionship, or the unfortunate situations, into which they fall. Supposing such a consequence could, in the infancy of such children, have been foreseen as probable, except prevented by a premature death, how absurd would have been the very affection of the parents which would have preferred their children's living for such a fearful hazard, to their being removed to eternal safety in their childhood or early youth! The exception to this state of the account is where, at a very early age, there are the most decided evidences of piety (if the parents are firmly persuaded that real piety once kindled in the soul will never be suffered to be extinguished), and especially when this piety is associated with such mental powers as to promise *eminent* excellence and usefulness. But in some instances, *this piety itself seems to be created under the instrumentality of sickness and impending death*. So that the affectionate parent seems to hear a voice from heaven saying, You shall not see your beloved child a child of God, *but at the cost of losing him*. The instance of Mrs. Saunders's daughter cannot but be fresh in my memory. And I believe that most pious and affectionately devoted mother, amidst the deep and pensive regrets of memory, does sometimes, nay, very often, feel *exaltation in the loss* of her rare and admirable child. As if she should say, "I have lost her; but through the very dispensation by which she was

taken away, she became that which I shall one day feel inexpressible joy to meet again. By *such* a loss how much I have gained, which (humanly speaking) I might not have gained, BUT at the cost of losing her."—And that dear James, so bright and interesting, the object of so many hopes, so admirably vigorous and premature in intellect, was not he in a measure an example under the same predicament? Was not the decided piety which brightened the termination of his life, and is so blessed a consolation to you in the mournful deprivation—was not this piety a star which rose in the darkness of his long affliction? He was to become decidedly devoted to God, and then he was to die for it! But so to have died, is better than to have advanced forward into life in an undetermined state of mind with respect to the supreme concern of life, to be thrown into all the temptations of the world, without the sovereign principle fixed in the soul. It is not that I am in the least doubting that James had serious thoughts and conscience of religion; but the decided, the absolute devotion to God, was not *that* heavenly gift imparted during, and through the instrumental operation of, his sensible transition toward another world? . . . .

---

CXL. TO JOHN BULLAR, ESQ.

*Stapleton, Sept. 20, 1826.*

MY DEAR SIR,—I am too well assured of your benevolence to doubt that you have sometimes a friendly recollection of your former pupil John. It is at his wish, quite spontaneously expressed, that I trouble you with a few lines.

. . . . A day or two since he asked me, whether I had, at any time, latterly, heard from you; and said, it would be a satisfaction to him if I would write to you, to express his grateful remembrance and respect, and his regret for not having more fully, at all times, improved his advantages under your instruction, and for any cause of disapprobation and dissatisfaction which he had in any instance given you. I felt it necessary to promise to do so; and trust you will feel that I have, in this his wish and request, an adequate apology for troubling you, amidst your many labors and cares, with this brief account of circumstances, so interesting in our own little secluded family. I hesitate whether I have any right to say one word more: if I had a *right* what I would say would be, that if, in any fraction of an hour, you could afford your friendly attention for writing two or three sentences, they would be, I know, very greatly acceptable to John; at the same time I would pointedly say, that this is nothing of the nature of a claim, and that we shall not be the less assured of your kind wishes, though your constant and laborious operations prevent your doing it. . . . .

I remain, my dear Sir, Yours,

With very great respect and esteem,

J. FOSTER.

## CXL. TO JOHN BULLAR, ESQ.

*Stapleton, Oct. 9, 1826.*

MY DEAR SIR,—I have to thank you in John's name and my own, for your very kind letter to him and me : it was very acceptable and gratifying to him ; but he is now no longer a subject of advice and consolation.

About the time of his receiving that letter, the progress of his illness was apparently so slow, that it appeared probable he might still survive a number of weeks ; and when, eight or nine days since, he rather suddenly became very sensibly worse, it was deemed to be some effect of indigestion, the stress of which might be transient ; but it proved to be (according to what he since mentioned to have been at the time his own conviction) the final stage and acceleration of the malady. By the middle of last week his little remaining strength was evidently vanishing very fast, all relish for any kind of food was gone, and he felt a sense of illness and insupportable weariness through his whole frame. But he uttered no word of murmur, but expressed his resignation to the divine disposal, yet with great anxiety that his severely tried patience might not fail : but he expressed an earnest desire for the hour of deliverance. On the Thursday forenoon he said to me, with a peculiar and affecting emphasis, " I have a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, and is not that far better ? "

A friendly and religious physician, who was with him repeatedly that day, having given an inexplicit answer to his inquiry, how long it was probable he might live, he interrogated me with an earnest look and tone, as to what the physician might have said to myself after leaving the room ; and was soothed by my telling him, that the time would certainly be very short. We did not, however, apprehend that the hour was quite so near at hand.

It was not, therefore, without some small degree of surprise, that, at seven or eight o'clock in the evening, we perceived it evident that he was sinking very fast. His three or four immediate relatives, the physician, and the old affectionate servants, were assembled in the room, and he spoke continuously for a considerable time, with apparently little difficulty of utterance, and with the most perfect composure and command of mind and language ; addressing or adverting to each of us, expressing a grateful sense of the kindness he had experienced ; his request to be forgiven anything in which he had ever been blameable towards any of us ; his wish, that each one might receive one more religious admonition from his death ; his trust that we shall all meet again in a happier world ; and his hope in the divine mercy through Jesus Christ, that he was going to that happier world. There was some strange character of *dignity* in his manner and language, such as I had never seen him exemplify till his last illness, and especially in these last hours ; so that I was, on subsequent reflection, reminded of what was said of I forget

whom, that "nothing in his life ever became him so well as his going out of it."\* At short intervals he spoke frequently during the advancing hours, expressing his calm hope—his confidence, but with the pensive expression, several times, of a wish that he might have felt more animated and delightful emotions. "I want," he said, "that He would lift up the light of his countenance more clearly upon me." I said to him, that this was not *essential* to the solidity of the last consolations. The last complete sentence, I think, that he uttered was, "I know that my Redeemer liveth." He retained his consciousness and his ability to reply, with intelligent, significant monosyllables and signs, till within the last hour, in the latter part of which he fell asleep, and it was not certain that he ever really awaked. His final breath was distinctly perceptible, and was followed at an interval by a struggle of the oppressed lungs, to inhale once more; but I felt sure that this was only mechanical, and that he suffered no pain. . . . His suffering frame was, except in the face, exhausted and attenuated to a mere skeleton. In looking on the deserted countenance, through which mind and thought had so recently, but, as it were, a few minutes before, emanated, I felt what profound mystery there was in the change. What is it that is gone? What is it now? During the last stage of his illness (since his return from the sea), he has seemed a strangely different person from what he had been before; it has looked as if a latent, unsuspected character were developed. His former habitual, systematic, invincible reserve, seemed to have left him, and without any effort of his to overcome it. He would easily and freely talk on religion, himself, death, hereafter; subjects on which it was heretofore impossible, in any way, to draw him into communication; and, at the same time, with a degree of maturity and compass of thought, which I had never attributed to him. In truth, I have never, but in his very early years, and in this short concluding season, fairly had the means of *knowing* the nature and extent of the operations of his mind; that unfortunate and continual reserve having placed me and kept me in a state of estrangement often painful, and sometimes creating a displacency, which, I believe, has made me deficient in kindness to him. I was promising myself, that, as his mind advanced towards maturity, it would, at length, *come out* in a manner to produce a more free and satisfactory intercourse. I now deem it probable, that even before his long indisposition, or at least during the earlier stages of it, there was much more of the visiting of serious thoughts than there were the external signs of. At the same time I fully believe, that the real ultimate *prevalence* of such thoughts in his mind was caused through a gracious

\* "I have spoke

With one that saw him die; who did report  
That very frankly he confessed his treasons,  
Implored your highness' pardon; and set forth  
A deep repentance; *nothing in his life*  
*Became him like the leaving it."*

MACBETH, Act i., Scene 4.

influence of Heaven, by the augmenting illness, which gradually brought upon him the conviction, that his stay on earth was approaching to a close. I think it probable, that his mind must have been occupied with the most serious subjects even *before* he came to that decided conviction : for the state of his sentiments when he became communicative, about two months since, appeared to me such as must have been preceded by a process not very short.

Thus there is a termination of all the cares, solitudes, and apprehensive anticipations, concerning our son and your pupil. He is saved from entering on a scene of infinite corruptions, temptations and grievances ; and borne, I trust, to that happy region where he can no more sin, suffer, or die ; safe, and pure, and happy for ever. In such a view and confidence, I am (and my wife too, though for the present more painfully affected) *more* than resigned to the dispensation ; the consolation greatly exceeds the grief.

Indeed, I believe, that to me, the consolatory considerations have much less to combat with than in the case of parents in general. Probably I may before have expressed to you, that I have such a horror of this world, as a scene for young persons to be cast and hazarded into, that habitually, and with a strong and pointed sentiment, I congratulate children and young persons on being intercepted by death at the entrance into it, except in a few particular instances of extraordinary promise for piety, talent, and usefulness. . . . If, as in *our* case, parents see their children, in an early period of life, visited by a dispensation, which, *in one and the same act, raises them to piety and dooms them to die, so that they receive an immortal blessing at the price of death* ;—oh ! methinks it is a cheap cost, both to them and to those who lose them ! In one of my first conversations with John, on his irrecoverable situation, when I said, “ We shall be very sorry to lose you, John,” he calmly and affectionately replied, “ You will not be sorry, if you have cause to believe that I am beyond all sorrow.”

While I was writing the above, yesterday, your kind letter came to hand. We are most truly grateful to you for the deep and friendly interest you have taken in John's welfare, and now take in our mourning for his departure. He *was* very cordially gratified by your letter, both for the kind personal regard, and the religious suggestions and consolations which it conveyed. I can perfectly enter into your feelings respecting the *dispersion of your children*. This has always appeared to me one of the most melancholy circumstances in life. In my own case, I have anticipated it as a grievous circumstance, on supposition I should live long enough to experience it. But I hope you will have the satisfaction of seeing and hearing that your children prosper in temporal interests ; and God grant them and you, that they may, above all, prosper in the infinitely more important ones.

I am, my dear Sir, yours,

With the highest respect and esteem,

J. FOSTER.

## CXLII. TO. MRS. SAUNDERS.

*Stapleton, 1826.*

MY DEAR MADAM,—Your very kind letter could not fail to be extremely welcome. Most truly you have been taught to understand to the utmost the feelings which are caused by such an event. But it has been granted to you to enjoy the most animating consolations; and we have to thank the Almighty that such consolations are granted to us also.

Though the final hour of the late dear youth did arrive considerably sooner than, some weeks since, we had expected, the event itself had, for four or five months, been regarded as inevitable. Before he went to the sea, at Midsummer, a judicious and pious physician (a relative of ours) plainly signified that the symptoms were of the most decisive character, and that he advised the expedient rather because it might afterwards be a subject of painful reflection *not* to have tried it, than from any hope that this or any other means could be efficacious. He returned very evidently feeble, more emaciated, and suffering more than at the time he went. Had he stayed but a few days longer, his return would have been impracticable, which would have been a distressing and melancholy circumstance. His decline was so sensibly progressive, that after a very short time he was confined entirely to his bed.

With a small exception of those very slight faults (very slight in his case), so naturally incident to youth, his conduct had always been good. But we remained painfully in doubt respecting that deeper interest of the soul. And a habitual reserve of character, beyond any instance I have ever known, had always made it impossible to bring him to any satisfactory communication on the subject. Before his return from the coast, it was strongly intimated to him, rather than plainly and pointedly declared, that the malady was decidedly fatal. But even this, which he received with perfect calmness, did not draw him into any disclosure of his silent thoughts. A short time after his return home, I felt it my painful duty, and reproached myself for having so long deferred it, to inform him in the most express terms, with a view to the great subject of religion and eternity, that his life was infallibly drawing to a close. I never shall forget the delight, not unmingled with a degree of surprise, which was caused by his reply.

With the most entire calmness, and easy simplicity of manner, he said he had for a good while past been convinced in his own mind that he could not recover; that his thoughts had been deeply exercised with his solemn prospects, and that he had an humble hope in the divine mercy. He talked with perfect freedom; his long and invincible reserve seemed to have left him all at once, without an effort; and it appeared as if a new, or hitherto latent character were suddenly developed before me. He expressed a tranquil resignation to the divine disposal, and a willingness to yield up his life; only a wish that if it should so please God, there might be permitted him a little protraction of the remaining

period for preparation; but this with submission. Neither then, nor at any subsequent moment, did he betray any regret at his irrecoverable situation,—any clinging to life, or reluctance to surrender it.

Through the succeeding weeks his mind remained in the same peaceful state, while he was sensible that at the end of each few days his little feeble strength was still more diminished. And this peace was founded avowedly on the *merits of Christ alone*. His expressions of hope were sometimes mingled with self-condemning recollections of negligence and sin.

His decline was very gradual till within about a week of the end. He did not suffer all the distressing symptoms of the disease: but had enough for the exercise of patience, in laborious short breathing, cough, and oppressive debility and languor. These were greatly aggravated in the concluding week, and in the last few days he complained of an almost insupportable illness and weariness throughout his whole frame. But he never uttered a murmur at the severe discipline; fearfully solicitous, however, sometimes lest his patience should fail under the trial. The last day but one he took great interest in a conversation respecting the probable manner of the future separate state of existence. His longing for the final deliverance became very earnest, especially in the last day; which we did not, however, at the beginning of it, by any means expect to be the last. . . .

About eight o'clock he was so evidently sinking fast, that we were drawn (four of us, and the two old faithful servants) into his room. He then spoke a considerable time continuously, with wonderful composure, and clearness of thought and language. . . . He was sensible till within the very last hour. When I thought his mind was finally withdrawn from us, and his eyes finally closed, I touched his face, and spoke to him, and he instantly looked up, and with evident intelligence spoke one word in reply; and a few moments after, looking at his mother, he, in an affectionate tone, said, "Mamma!" the last word he uttered. A little afterwards he sunk into sleep, and, as far as could be discerned, passed from sleep into death; I believe without any sense of suffering. There was a perfectly distinct last breath, followed, at an interval, by several ineffectual efforts of the oppressed lungs to inhale yet once more; but I felt sure, from the perfect quietness of his countenance and his frame, that this was no more than a mechanical action of the subsiding principle of life. We have seen his pale and insensible form now for the last time; for while I have been writing this account, the lid of the coffin has been fastened down.

The previous and commencing operations of religion on his mind can now never be certainly known in this world. But as in the case of that ever dear young friend (Sarah Saunders), the memory of whom can never fade, so I believe in this instance too, that long illness, growing into a settled anticipation of approaching death, was made the instrumental discipline for bringing the soul effectually and decidedly to

God. Thus our two dear young relatives had the noblest, best gifts under the sun conferred upon them at the cost of life ! It was Heaven's gracious will that they should attain to the soul's true welfare ; but they were to die for it ! And, my dear madam, was not this a cheap cost of so divine an attainment ? Could we for the world wish them back in a state of the most vigorous health, *but without that which they gained in the very process of losing it ?* No ! no ! In beholding this world, overspread with all manner of evil, and thinking of the fearful hazard of young persons entering upon it, to pursue their course through it, what an animating consolation is it to see *these two* by a sovereign act of the great Disposer, carried at once beyond the entire sphere of evil, and secured safe and happy for ever ! . . . My dear wife feels the full value of this consolation, while the separation more painfully affects, for the present, her extreme sensibility, rendered, as it is, more pensive and deep by habitual feeble health.





## CHAPTER VII.

THE SERAMPORE CONTROVERSY—MR. HALL'S SETTLEMENT IN BRISTOL  
—DISSENTERS' ORDINATION—CATHOLIC EMANCIPATION—THE RE-  
FORM BILL.

1827-1832.

MR. FOSTER'S mental structure and habits obviously led him rather to be a meditative observer of human life and character, than to engage with ardor in practical concerns. Technical punctilios and formalities were his aversion; and it costs no effort to believe, that "he never had the least curiosity to inquire into the official affairs of societies and committees."\* In one important instance, however, he was not satisfied with being a "quiet looker-on," but maintained a course of strenuous exertion on behalf of what he deemed to be a meritorious cause, when he saw it exposed to desertion and obloquy. "I am afraid," he said to a friend in 1826, "we most amiable and liberal-minded Baptists shall be getting into something like war about the matters relating to Serampore." To persons familiar with the proceedings of religious institutions in the present day, an allusion will readily be understood to be here made to the differences that arose after Mr. Fuller's death (in 1815), between the Serampore missionaries (Carey, Marshman, and Ward), and the committee of the Baptist Missionary Society, and issued in their acting for some time as separate bodies. It was not till Dr. Marshman's arrival in England, in 1826, that Mr. Foster took a particular interest in the business. Previously,† according to his own candid avowal, he had shared in the prejudices that had been gradually prevailing against this member of the Serampore fraternity, and which had implicated, also, the character of the whole union. But the statements and explanations made by Dr. Marshman, convinced him that these prejudices were mostly founded on gross misrepresentations. This conviction was subsequently corroborated during Dr.

\* Missionary Discourse, p. 499.

† Introductory Observations to Dr. Marshman's Statement, p. viii.

M.'s sojourn under Mr. Foster's roof, which afforded ample opportunity for estimating his character, and of acquiring by the most free and unceremonious canvassing, a clear understanding of the facts (both leading and subordinate) of the case. Besides writing an introduction of seventy pages to Dr. Marshman's "Statement," Foster maintained an extensive correspondence on the subject, for the purpose of correcting erroneous impressions, or soliciting pecuniary aid.\* In private intercourse with his friends, Serampore formed the principal topic of conversation, and with those among them whose views differed from his own, he held frequent and protracted debates.

If any explanation be thought necessary for thus noticing an occurrence on every account so much to be regretted, it may be observed, that the part taken by Mr. Foster was too decided and prominent to be passed over in silence ; and there is good reason for believing, that he would have deemed it simply an act of justice to record in this memoir, his deliberate judgment in favor of men, whom he regarded (and whom posterity will regard) as among the most illustrious examples of Christian self-devotement. In writing to his early associate and friend, Mr. Fawcett, he says, "I must think I am tolerably informed on that matter ; for Dr. M. has been five or six weeks under this roof, as the most quiet seclusion he could find, while preparing for the press a work in explanation and vindication. I had seen a great deal of him before the daily communications of the recent weeks, during which I have become acquainted, I think, with all that is material in the state of the case. I have heard, I believe, from one quarter and another, including the papers in the magazines, most of what is said, or can be said, on the other side. All manner of questions, hundreds of them, have been put to him, without the least reserve, down to the most minute circumstances, and he is quite freely communicative in all things whatever. After this I should not think it worth while to answer any one who should tell me, that I am imposed on by Dr. M.'s artifice, evasion, &c. But he has no such quality about him, and he needs no craft or concealment ; for I believe there is not in Christendom a man more highly and uniformly conscientious, a man more anxiously and scrupulously solicitous to do right in all things. I have no doubt, that you will

\* "About the Serampore business I have elaborately written, chiefly for private communication and representation, east, west, north, and south, as much as would, I am sure, make a large quarto volume in the modern style of printing."—*To the Editor, July 18, 1832*

be in a great degree of the same opinion, after you shall have read his next publication ; but no representations in writing, in which a vast number of illustrative and confirmatory small particulars must necessarily be left out, can give the impression so completely as the intimate personal intercourse during many scores of hours, in which all the characteristic minutiae, down to the very smallest details of the course of conduct, are naturally and inevitably brought in sight and discussion. There has not been, I am confident, one singular particular, of the very smallest importance in the Serampore system, or in Dr. M.'s own conduct, that has not been freely talked over, while he has been in this house. Many things he has mentioned, which, he has observed in the particular instances, he had never thought of mentioning, or had never deemed worth mentioning to any other person. And judging from this ample and minute disclosure, challenged and questioned, and traversed at every point, and with a constant reference to all the animadversions circulated in report and in print—judging upon this large and criticised explanation, I am convinced, that the whole system and conduct at Serampore (and of Marshman, *quite* as much as of Carey and Ward) has exhibited a completeness of devotement, an exclusion of selfish purposes, an unanimity of co-operation, a simplicity of object, and an indefatigable industry, of which there is no equal or second example (in an *associated company* of persons) in these times ; and to which there has been hardly a superior in any other times. . . . In short, never were mortal men devoted throughout, with more disinterested singleness of purpose, to a noble object. Mrs. Marshman has co-operated in completely the same spirit ; and with very great pecuniary efficiency. And John Marshman . . . has acted most generously and magnanimously. As early as the age of seventeen, he had opportunities and overtures for going into courses for making a fortune, which by this time he would have done, with less indefatigable exertion than he has devoted to the Christian service, to which he has wholly given another seventeen years or nearly so, and is now worth nothing.”\*

\* “ It is of no use to make professions of impartiality. That indeed was not the state of mind in which I began to give a somewhat particular attention to the subject ; as I have said near the beginning of these pages, that I was very considerably prejudiced against Dr. M. till his free explanations on all points in question, led me to a conviction that gross calumny, that wanton and extravagant falsehood, was at work against him. It will be said, of course, that this went into a violent prejudice on the other side. I have to answer, that it was not, at any rate, such as to make me refuse at-

Other passages in Foster's correspondence will show, that the high estimate he formed of Dr. Marshman, as a Christian and a missionary, was not influenced by any remarkable congeniality in their general mental habits and tastes, for in these they widely differed; it will also appear, that though his convictions in favor of the Serampore fraternity, as to the noble and disinterested spirit that animated them, and their strong claims on the gratitude and support of the Christian public, remained unshaken to the last, he candidly allowed, that on some points his opinions were somewhat modified by the opposing statements. In 1837, a reunion was effected with the Baptist Missionary Society, a measure in which he did not acquiesce, though it relieved him from a very considerable expenditure of time and labor.

A great accession was made to Mr. Foster's resources of social enjoyment by the settlement of the Rev. W. Anderson in Bristol, as classical and mathematical tutor of the Baptist College, in 1825; and soon after, by the return of Mr. Hall to spend his last years in the scene of his early ministry. With the former his in-

tention to other statements or evidence. I listened to multifarious testimony and opinion against him, given with whatever force it could derive from the knowledge and acuteness of some of his most decided and able accusers. . . . In addition, I have seen a considerable number of private documents. The circumstances which happened to render my habitation the most convenient retirement for Dr. M., while digesting his statement, have brought me acquainted with very many particulars and developments relating to its subject, and with the character of the man himself. If any one should say that I have been beguiled by polite dexterity and insinuating address, I should think it needless to make any other observation than that, whoever he may be that says so, he would make rather light of any one's opinion who should say that *he* could be duped in his judgment of the character of any man, with whom he should pass several months in daily and familiar intercourse, though it were Prince Metternich himself. Let due praise then be rendered to the modesty of such as, with very slight, or without the smallest, personal acquaintance with Dr. M., shall have an agreeable sense of infallibility in asserting that the judgment of one so intimately conversant with him is deluded. . . . Having in consequence of the local circumstances which brought me so directly in his way, been led to take an inquisitive interest in the concern in which he is involved, and having seen no appearance of a sustained and boldly uncompromising effort to assert his vindication, I have been induced by love of justice to do what I could in the capacity of advocate. What other motive can be ascribed or conceived for diverting so much time and attention from occupations for which they were greatly wanted? From what other motive could I be willing to incur, and that from persons with not one of whom I have ever had any manner of disagreement, a share, as I must submit to expect, of the animosity which will continue in action for a time against a man and a fraternity who were so long heretofore, and will remain ultimately and permanently hereafter, approved, admired, and revered?"—*Introductory Observations* to a Statement relative to Serampore, supplementary to a "Brief Memoir," by J. Marshman, D.D., London, 1828, pp. lxix—lxxi.

tercourse was frequent and cordial. As to Mr. Hall, Foster's letters abound with intimations of the vivid interest he took in the discourses and conversation of his great coeval.\* Notwithstanding their difference of opinion on the Scrampore question, they were often in each other's society, and would have met much more frequently, had not Mr. Foster's state of health, and his distance from the city, prevented. It has been remarked, and apparently with truth, that the social circle was resorted to by Mr. Hall (in his later years at least), as a soothing relaxation, in which old associations and the scenes of past life were the favorite topics. Foster, on the other hand, valued it, though not exclusively, as a means of mental excitement, and enjoyed (unless physically disabled) "a long stout evening's talk," in which was duly intermingled the "animated No." On the occasion of Mr. Hall's decease, no one had a deeper sense than Mr. Foster of the irreparable loss sustained by that event; it was "a sense," to use his own expressive language, "of privation partaking of desolateness." "That memory," he said, "will never vanish from the minds of those who have heard his preaching, and frequently his conversation, during the five years that he has been resident here. As a preacher his like or equal will come no more."† "The chasm he has left can never be filled. The thing to be deplored is, that he did not fill a space which he was beyond all men qualified to occupy in our religious literature. It is with deep regret one thinks what an inestimable possession for our more cultivated, and our rising intelligent young people, would have been some six or ten volumes of his sermons."‡ Instead of the funeral sermon which he declined (being under medical interdict at the time from all public speaking), he paid in his "Observations on Mr. Hall as

\* "Hall is still in our sort of circle the great primary object, to talk of and to hear talk, whether in his public or private positions. The progress of time but augments the evidence of the eminent value of our acquisition in Anderson, whether as tutor or conversational associate. He is your man *all round*. He is more intimate than any one else is with Hall, and measures his talents and qualities with mathematical precision.—*To B. Stokes, Esq., June 11, 1827.*

"Hall is supporting his uniform tenor of admirable preaching with a measure of usefulness, which, however, he sometimes regrets not to see more evident and direct. And one may justly wonder it should not partake more of the extraordinary, considering the superlative excellence of the ministration. But it will, it certainly *must*, have a most important effect on the rising race of educated and inquiring persons."—*To the Rev. T. Coles, May 1, 1829.*

† To John Easthope, Esq., March 3, 1831.

‡ To the Rev. John Fawcett, March 9, 1831.

a Preacher," a tribute to his memory, which allowed a more ample and impartial application of his critical powers than would have been in harmony with the first emotions of sorrow. "In the composition business," he says, "I have made very poor work all this long time past, with the little exception (exception I mean in point of industry merely—not successful industry) of the piece about the character of Hall as a preacher. It was on many accounts most reluctantly, that I consented to attempt that task, which I did not, till urged with the plea that to refuse will appear unfriendly to his memory. It proved a matter of difficulty and labor to excess, and was the work of several months, though it will not extend through more than about sixty pages in the printed book. There are parts of it that will not please the indiscriminating admirers of the great preacher. The foresight that such must be the case, was one cause of my reluctance to the service."\*

In 1829, Foster was invited to take part in the ordination of a minister over the congregation meeting in Swift's Alley, Dublin. His reply indicates, that his early antipathy to the formal and ceremonial in religion, had only been strengthened by advancing years. "In answer to this application," he says, "while I feel it to be very friendly, and to do me more honor than I can justly claim, I have to make a very simple story:—namely, that I have been I may say almost all my life, and still more in the latter part of it, in the uniform habit of ridiculing our dissenting ordination, as a relic of the hierarchy; which I have always intensely hated, as a poor apeing among us who have no ecclesiastical institution, of a ceremony which has all manner of propriety (as consistent with the pretensions) in an established ecclesiastical order. It carries an appearance, and (though this be somewhat reservedly avowed) it makes, and is understood to make, a sort of pretension of conferring some kind of speciality of fitness, qualification, and authorization, to perform the duties of a Christian minister. There is a notion, that the ceremony creates something more, and something more effective and sacred, in the relation between him and the people, than could be contained in a serious deliberate engagement between them to accept each other in that relation. Now my wish would be, that every notion and practice of this kind, in short *everything sacerdotal and ceremonial, were cleared out of our religious economy.*

\* To B. Stokes, Esq., Dec. 19, 1831.

"This solemnity of ordination, partaking somewhat of a lingering superstition, has acquired of late years not a little of the ludicrous, from the frequency and facility with which, beyond former times, this supposed consecrated appointment and relation is dissolved—and off goes, or off is sent, the solemnly ordained minister and pastor, in quest of his fortune elsewhere.

"In saying all this, I beg you not to take me as if I were making any very grave matter of the thing—as if I fancied this little rag of hierarchy *infected with the plague*, and capable of infusing some mighty mischief into our religious constitution. I merely think it would better comport with good sense, and with religious simplicity as the dissenters' profession, to abandon such a ceremonial. I have acted on this opinion—or taste. In two places where in former years I have sustained the 'settled' ministerial office, I have declined, and with little difficulty or objection on the part of the people, all such formality of appointment. Several within my knowledge have done the same. Mr. Hall was never ordained, nor, as I have heard, Mr. Jay of Bath.\*

"But whether I be right or wrong in such an opinion, or taste, or call it caprice or prejudice—it will be evident to you and Mr. Cross after such an explanation, that it would be quite *inconsistent*, almost ludicrously so, in me to take any part whatever in an ordination,—and to have it said, that I even 'took a voyage,' 'went across the sea,' to officiate in such a transaction.

"I am glad to find you are likely to be agreeably united with a minister. . . . As to the affair of ordination, it may very probably be, that the settled state of opinions among your people may render such a ceremony indispensable to a satisfactory pastoral relation. I retain interest enough for the station in Swift's Alley (where I once so little did my duty in capacity of minister for a little while), to wish very cordially that it may at length be favored with some religious prosperity."†

In the same letter, Foster adverts to the measure of Catholic emancipation, which had just been recommended in the king's speech at the opening of parliament (Feb. 5). "All the friends

\* "As to the report concerning myself which Mr. F. heard, it was groundless. I was ordained, and the service was published; I only deviated a little in the article of 'Confession,' substituting instead an address containing only some leading and general views of the gospel. As to Mr. Hall, *he* never *was* ordained; but one day, some years ago, when asked by a brother why he was not?—'Because, sir,' said he, 'I was a fool.'"—*From the Rev. W. Jay, to the Editor, August 23, 1845.*

† To John Purser, jun., Esq., Feb. 21, 1829.

of political improvement," he says, "are in sympathy with the exhilarated feelings you express in anticipation of the grand change of measures respecting Ireland. At the same time we are still in some fear, lest the prodigious excitement in opposition, throughout this country, should have the effect of cribbing and narrowing the enactment in its passage through the legislature. The affair is now brought forward on its best and strongest ground of *policy* and imperious necessity—the bare dry abstract question of *right*, being reduced to a trifle in so portentous a crisis. The catholic claim, as matter of *pure right* (under the name of liberty of conscience), has always appeared to me a little dubious, considering the treacherous, and in all ways detestable, quality of popery; but it has constantly appeared to me most perverse and contemptible to stickle about this, as a competent ground of refusal, in the face of an infinitely urgent interest of national safety and improvement."

To another friend, shortly after the Relief Bill had passed, he writes, "It is a very grand thing that these people have been doing for the national welfare; and the more gratifying for having come with a surprising suddenness, and contrary to all that had been expected from the predominant movers of the exploit. It is a curious and memorable circumstance, that a measure which could not, in all probability, have been effected by a completely united ministry of whigs and liberals (had that been a possible composition of it), has been resolutely carried by a set of men avowedly opposed to liberalism, and opposed till lately to this very measure itself. One cannot but deem this a very signal interposition of the divine Providence in favor of the nation. It is a less worthy feeling, but a feeling which one cannot help thinking one's self tolerably right in indulging, to exult in the overwhelming mortification thus inflicted on the whole proud, bigoted tribe of opposers of all improvement and beneficial innovation. They are (here in Bristol pre-eminently) amazed, and stunned, and astounded, almost out of their senses, to see the thing not only done, but done with a high hand by their *own set*,—the high tories, their very idols, the high-church-and-state standard men,—and done in direct and cool contempt of all their loud and general remonstrances. And it is such a dashing and prodigious kick at '*the wisdom of our ancestors*' as seems to threaten unmeasured hazard to everything else that has been under the sacred protection of that venerable and inviolable su-



perstition. Those narrow-minded *evangelicals in the church* have had their special share in the mortification, by seeing *among the bishops*, those very men on whose acquisition to the bench they have been congratulating themselves and the church, declaring for this wicked innovation—Ryder, the two Sumners, and Copleston. Within our time, and a much longer period, there has never been anything comparable to this great red-coat minister for hewing away the old venerable boundaries of prescription and exclusion. As to what he may do in the sequel, one dare not be sanguine. There are Portugal and the seat of Mahommedanism, and West India slavery, and the East India Monopoly, and the wretched mass of abuses in law, and the corn-laws, and taxation. I am afraid there is no betting on him for half of these, not to name such a thing as Parliamentary Reform, or any proceeding affecting the church property in Ireland.

“As to that same church establishment, its superstitious adherents must be liable, one thinks, to some unwelcome intrusions of feeling from the fact that now a decided, unquestionable majority of the people in the kingdom are recognized *dissenters*, in full possession of their civil and political rights and capacities,—the papist portion of them hating *that* establishment, and the protestant portion of them (such as are dissenters on principle) disapproving all secular religious establishments,—and with palpable evidence that *practical* dissent is progressive in a continually and rapidly augmenting ratio. This cannot but appear a bad and threatening predicament for the church to have come into, with an absolute helplessness for getting out of it. This will continually lessen *the value of the church to the state* as a political engine, as a formerly powerful mean of influence over the people. The state will come by degrees to consider whether the diminishing service which the church can render it be *worth the cost*. And when that consideration comes to operate, it will be discovered that the state is no very *religious* animal.

“At all events, it is inexpressibly gratifying, on the ground of religion, philanthropy, and all views of improvement, to observe the prominent characteristic of our times; a *mobility*, a tendency to alteration, a shaking, and cracking, and breaking up of the old condition of notions and things; an exploding of the principle, that things are to be maintained *because* they are ancient and established. Even that venerable humbug called ‘our admirable *constitution*’ has suffered woful assault and battery by this

recent transaction. This thing, the 'constitution,' has been commonly regarded, and talked, and written of (and was so talked of by the opposition in the late debates), as if it were something almost of *divine origin*, as if it had been delivered like the Law from the Mount, as a thing perfect, permanent, sacred, and inviolable. But now we have it practically shown, that one of its corners may be demolished without ceremony (Holy Temple though it has been accounted), when the benefit of the community requires an innovation; and therefore so may any other corner or portion of it, when the same cause shall demand. In this *special view* the late measure appears to me of incalculable importance. It now becomes a principle recognized that ANY innovation may be made when justice and policy require it. It is true that great pains were taken by some of the advocates, to maintain that it was *not* a violation of the said thing 'constitution.' But I willingly accept Mr. Peel's description of it as '*a breaking in upon the constitution.*'\* To think of all the nauseous cant there has been about the 'constitution' whenever any old established evil has been proposed to be corrected or abolished!"†

The introduction of the Reform Bill (March 1, 1831) opened a prospect of political amelioration, which Foster "had not the slightest expectation of living to see." "Are you, I wonder," he writes (before hearing the issue of the debate previous to the first reading)‡ "as some of us are here, in fear for the result? Still I hope that there has been success thus far—by this time the great preliminary question has been decided; we shall wait (you are *not* waiting) with extreme anxiety to hear *how*; but even if it has been decided right, there is still a fearful trial further on, where one sees in firm array, and with desperately resolute aspect, the whole mass and strength of inveterate corruption and aristocratic power. With that huge combination of corruption, it is 'now or never;' and I shall be delightfully disappointed if its resistance do not prove *substantially*, though not wholly, successful. My fear is that the proud aristocracy are so besotted as

\* "Mr. Peel, who is rather remarkable for groundless and unlucky concessions, owned that the late Act broke in on the Constitution of 1688; whilst in 1689, a very imposing minority of the then House of Lords, with a decisive majority in the lower House of Convocation, denounced this very Constitution of 1688, as breaking in on the English Constitution."—COLERIDGE, *On the Constitution of the Church and State, according to the idea of each*, 3d edition, p. 18.

† To B. Stokes, Esq., April 30, 1829.

‡ To John Easthope, Esq., March 9, 1831

not to understand the signs of the times ; as not to see, that if they do not concede, they will put all to ultimate hazard—I mean, *for their own interests*. They have been so long accustomed, and with complete impunity, to despise the people, under the name and character of the ‘ lower orders,’ ‘ the mob,’ and so forth, and to indulge and express their scorn of anything that miserable ‘ many-headed beast ’ can do against them, that it is vastly difficult for them to admit any conviction or fear about the matter.”

“ It is not for this country only, but for other nations, for Europe, that one fearfully contemplates this juncture of our affairs. Should the present ministry and projected reform fail, who shall insure us against becoming again involved in a general war for despotism against liberty,—ruining ourselves to ruin the cause of justice and the people all over the continent ? The scene and the prospects are dark and portentous there. All unquiet in the gigantic *republic* (it is little else) of France ; all perverse and ill-starred in Belgium ; the despots all in a fever of rage and eagerness, if they dare, to be in action ; and too probably, Warsaw by this time in a state of blood, and sack, and desolation, to be followed up by all the rigors of revenge and aggravated tyranny over the whole people ; while there is no power to interfere to turn that revenge, in fire and brimstone, on the barbarian oppressor.”

“ The only consolation is, that there is a sovereign power reigning over all. *That* consolation, however, is mingled with the gloom of knowing that the supreme Governor has a controversy, a fearful account to settle, with all the nations for their impiety and wickedness. So that it is but too sadly probable, there are ‘ vials of wrath ’ to be poured out on them all, before happier times shall come, that is to say, before they are worthy or fit for such times.”

The return of so vast a majority in favor of the bill at the general election in 1831, was hastily deemed by many, to be the death-blow of toryism, and even Foster indulged expectations of the triumphant progress of liberal principles, which a calm review of the state of the conflicting parties not long after, convinced him were far too sanguine. It is interesting to contrast the bright vision of political optimism which his ardent imagination created at this crisis, with the sombre views he generally entertained. “ It would be doing no good,” he says,\* “ if I could communi-

\* To John Easthope, Esq., M.P., May 21, 1831

cate any share of the elated wild-fire spirits with which we have been half-mad here, for you have quite enough of it, and more than enough already. . . . The result of the dissolution must have surpassed, I should think, the most sanguine dreams that flattered the imaginations of the ministry themselves. Is it not possible, if the very truth could be known, that some of them may be a little *frightened* at their own success? For it is little better, as the opposition prints and orators are truly saying, day after day, than a triumph of plain radicalism; and Lord Grey is notoriously a high-minded aristocrat, and probably some of his titled associates are much of the same temper. But aristocracy is now dashed from its proud position, never to regain it. . . . Doubtless, our nobility and commoners of rank and wealth will continue to have weight and influence in our national affairs—great enough in all reason; but it now appears to be doomed to be quite secondary and subordinate to the end of the chapter. This is what *we* wanted; but we should wonder if it can exactly please all those personages of high degree, who are concurring with apparent zeal, to accomplish the prodigious change. As to such a ‘my lord’ as he that is denominated Brougham and Vaux, I can imagine that he may not care . . . he has something that mounts him proudly above title and all its stupid pomps; but as to many of those who are ostensibly to coincide with him in the present measures, will it not secretly aggrieve them to suffer a deduction of about fifty per cent. at a stroke from the practical value of their nobility?

. . . . “We may now look for what shall approach rather nearly to a *real representation of the people*; and it is evident enough that such a House of Commons will assume a lofty ascendancy over every other power in the state. . . . It will say in a menacing tone, ‘My name is Legion, for we are many; we are in effect *the people*; we express their will and bear their authority, to which every other authority shall yield.’

“From this time forth, the ministry—*any* ministry that means to maintain place for three months, must act in conformity to the *national mind*. And to a ministry willing so to act, a prodigious advantage is gained by this surprising change. They will no longer be harassed to distraction by endless compromises to be adjusted; by the demands and menacing power of competitor factions; by the debased conditions on which his Grace or Paul Benfield will give the support of his half-dozen or half-score of

rotten boroughs ; by the anxiety to distribute the wages of corruption in such a manner as to keep the business going on, and the system from going to pieces. A ministry will now be able, in the name and strength of the people, to defy the contrivances of intriguers, 'the influences *behind* the throne;' and the personal caprices and perversities there may be on the throne itself. Is [King] William fully aware what he is doing for the *prerogative*, as it is named, of his successors on that seat of power? Perhaps he is, and is gratified to think that *he* has possessed and exerted a greater power than any of *them* will ever enjoy. It is not conceivable there can ever come a crisis in which a British monarch shall possess a power equal to the making such a prodigious dash as what he has now made. There can never again so much depend on the single will and determination of the crown. *He* might, for some time at least, have stood out against the national wishes and interest, abetting the aristocratic and boroughmonger party in a great degree, in defiance of the reforming spirit, retaining a tory ministry supported by a corrupt parliament ; but he has irrecoverably deprived the monarchy of all such power. . . It will be high amusement to see 'the bill' driving and forcing its way through the Lords, amidst the silent mortification of some, and the ungovernable rage of others. That they absolutely *must* pass it, and dare not even presume to modify it, is now, I suppose, a matter beyond all question. But to think of the desperate fury of a large quantity of them !"

During the interval between the introduction and settlement of this great measure, the elation of his feelings had subsided, and he began to look with suspicion and anxiety on the efforts that would be made by the enemies of the popular cause, to nullify its efficiency. "You have it your own way at last," he says, "the thing is done ; and I congratulate you. And now, what do you soberly and deliberately reckon on as the consequence, after the reform in your house shall have been carried into effect? The exultation and sanguine expectations of all around me, were putting me, last night, to look a little coolly at the prospect. And I confess the nearest and largest circumstance in it was not of the most pleasant aspect or color, being no other than this—a protracted and deadly warfare between the two parties, probably resulting in still greater changes, and perhaps at length in some great catastrophe. It is unlikely that the aristocracy will have learnt any wisdom from their experience. Where, in all Europe,

*have* their class learnt anything from events which might have instructed all but stocks and stones? The pride of our aristocracy (the proudest in the world), so desperately mortified, is not likely to subside into prudence and accommodation, but to work into rage, and a fierce systematic hostility against the ascendancy of the popular interest. And their means for this warfare are multifarious and formidable. Their vast wealth, their consequent local influence, their widely pervading connection with the church, the army, the law, the magistracy, and every shape of authority and institution in the whole country; their insertion into the edge (so to speak) of the highest part of what should be the democratic body, the great number of them, and those immediately next to them, that will come into the new House of Commons—the accomplished education and proficiency of their old leaders in every sort of state-craft, intrigue, and collusion—a court (king included probably) desperately and incorrigibly tenacious of the old system—the earnest favor of all the ‘great powers,’ as they are called, except France; and France perhaps going to terrify all the world again with the excesses of democracy,—all this, I confess, forebodes to me anything rather than a quiet course of events and improvement in this country.

“And then the reforming ministry, with a reformed House of Commons,—they will soon lose the favor of the people, and so be left bare to the unrelenting siege of their mortal enemies, if they do not dare and accomplish some grand exploits of almost revolutionary change. Think of *Ireland*,—the state of the poor—the load of taxation—the navigation laws—the East India and West India affairs—the municipal police—the *Church*—the foreign relations (Portugal, &c.)—the whole hideous chaos of the law—not to name the banking system and various other matters. These will require a series of the boldest measures that ever statesmen ventured. Will Lord Grey’s ministry (or whoever else shall constitute the ministry) venture such daring and radical measures? or be able to carry them through parliament, if they do venture, in the face of the combined, dogged opposition of an aristocracy co-operating with other interests also, besides the purely aristocratic, in employing every possible expedient of frustration?

“But if the reformed legislature shall fail to accomplish some grand changes, and so disappoint the people, *what then?* . . . How deadly bitter must be the mortification of the aristocracy at

the present moment ; to think that just twenty-four months since, one-fifth part voluntarily conceded of the reform now forced from them, would have made them grand favorites of the people, and established them in almost undisputed power for many years to come ! Still, I have no faith that even *this* infliction on their infatuation will convert them to a different course of policy. Do tell me whether your anticipations correspond to those I have been expressing, or whether yours are bright and placid.”\*

The preceding extracts show the deep interest Foster took in political subjects ; but it would be very erroneous to infer from the vehemence of his expressions, that he was influenced by the spirit of party. To do him justice, it is necessary to take into account his exalted idea of human life. Habituated to view it in its highest relations, under its moral aspect and as connected with its future destiny, he contemplated the general tenor of men’s pursuits with profound regret. The great majority he saw, were insensible to the awful grandeur of their existence, and to the immense possibilities of good that it could unfold, when actuated by pure and elevated principles. For the mass of the people he was ready to make large allowances ; the consumption of their time in unintermitting toil, in numberless cases their physical destitution, and still more their intellectual and moral depression, excited his deepest sympathy. But when he beheld the higher ranks bartering their prerogatives of birth, education, wealth, and power, for personal aggrandisement or selfish indulgences, in disregard or violation of the well-being of the multitudes below them, his feelings were often tinged with an indignant acerbity. He considered that towards delinquents of this class leniency was not permitted ; for weighing *their* misdeeds, the balances ought to be hung with the utmost nicety ; they were to be tried in accordance with their rank. Statesmen and legislators could not complain, that by his adjudication they were placed “on the low level of the inglorious throng.” Far from it ; “to whom much is given, of him shall be much required ; and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more,” was the rule which he applied with a stern severity.† How high he placed the standard

\* To John Easthope, Esq., M.P., June 12, 1832.

† “It is vastly reasonable to be requiring lenient judgments on the conduct, and respectful sympathy for the feelings of public men, while we see with what a violent passion, power and station are sought, with what desperate grappling claws of iron they are retained, and with what grief and mortification they are lost. It might be quite time enough, we should

litical virtue, and how little he allowed his admiration of  
 cendant abilities and coincidence on several great questions  
 arp his judgment and induce a more favorable verdict, is  
 n in his review of Fox's Historical Work, where he portrays  
 ideal of a statesman with a master's hand.

k, to commence this strain of tenderness, when in order to fill the places  
 power and emolument, it has become necessary to drag by force retiring  
 ne and modest talent from private life, and to retain them in those situ-  
 s by the same compulsion, in spite of the most earnest wishes to re-  
 t, excited by delicacy of conscience and a disgust at the pomp of state.  
 long as men are pressing as urgently into the avenues of place and  
 ver, as ever the genteel rabble of the metropolis have pushed and  
 crowded into the play-house to see the new actor, and so long as a most  
 violent conflict is maintained between those who are in power and those  
 who want to supplant them, we think statesmen form by eminence the  
 class of persons to whose characters both the contemporary examiner and  
 the historian are not only authorized, but in duty bound, to administer jus-  
 tice in its utmost rigor, without one particle of extenuation. While forcing  
 their way toward office in the state, and while maintaining the possession  
 once acquired, they are apprised, or might and should be apprised, of the  
 nature of the responsibility, and it is certain they are extremely well ap-  
 prised of the privileges. They know that the public welfare depends, in  
 too great a degree, on their conduct, and that the people have a natural in-  
 stinctive prejudice in favor of their leaders, and are disposed to confide to  
 the utmost extent. They know that a measure of impunity, unfortunate for  
 the public, is enjoyed by statesmen, their very station affording the means  
 both of concealment and defence for their delinquencies. They know that  
 in point of emolument they are more than paid from the labors of the people  
 for any services they render; and that they are not bestowing any particular  
 favor on the country by holding their offices, as there are plenty of men,  
 almost as able and good as themselves, ready to take their places, if they  
 would abdicate them. When to all this is added the acknowledged fact,  
 that the majority of this class of men have trifled with their high responsi-  
 bility, and taken criminal advantage of their privileges, we can have no  
 patience to hear of any claim for a special indulgence of charity, in reading  
 and judging the actions of statesmen.

"On the ground of morality in the abstract, separately from any con-  
 sideration of the effect of his representations, the biographer of statesmen is  
 bound to a very strict application of the rules of justice, since these men  
 constitute, or at least belong to, the uppermost class of the inhabitants of  
 the earth. They have stronger inducements, arising from their situation,  
 than other men, to be solicitous for the rectitude of their conduct; their sta-  
 tion has the utmost advantage for commanding the assistance of whatever  
 illumination a country contains; they see, on the large scale, the effect of  
 all the grand principles of action; they make laws for the rest of mankind,  
 and they direct the execution of justice. If the eternal laws of morality are  
 to be applied with a soft and lenient hand in the trial and judgment of such  
 an order of men, it will not be worth while to apply them at all to the sub-  
 ordinate classes of mankind; as a morality that exacts but little, where the  
 means and the responsibility are the greatest, would betray itself to con-  
 tempt by pretending to sit in solemn judgment on the humbler subjects of  
 its authority. The laws of morality should operate, like those of nature, in  
 the most palpable manner on the largest substances."—*Contributions, &c.,*  
*to the Eclectic Review, Vol. I., pp. 225, 227. Review of Macdiarmid's*  
*Lives of British Statesmen. October and November, 1808.*



His views of the great social relations were sustained by the natural strength of his character, and nourished by meditation in a life of comparative seclusion. Had he engaged in practical politics, he might have felt the necessity of curbing the impatience of his ardent mind while watching the slow progress of improvement, and have found some amends for a less rapid advance, amidst the complications of modern society, in the greater security with which the requisite changes are brought about.

---

## LETTERS.

CXLIII. TO J. B. WILLIAMS, ESQ.\*

*April 20, 1827.*

DEAR SIR,—I am, or ought to be, ashamed to think how long it is since our friend Mr. H. offered me whatever should be the first opportunity in his communications with your part of the country, for the conveyance of a line to you, in acknowledgment of your highly acceptable and valuable present of a copy of your life of P. Henry—a book which, in addition to its intrinsic value, and to the kindness of the presenter, has the grace of so very elegant an exterior. I beg you to believe, that this ill-looking lateness of acknowledgment, from one who is procrastination all over, in all things and times, has in real truth nothing to do with the sincerity of the thanks which I request you to accept.

Your many curious and interesting additions to the work have rendered it far more valuable than it was before, especially in connecting its subject, by so many remarkable points, *with those times* as to make it greatly more illustrative of them. While, as intimately present with the immediate family, the reader is made to see much more of what was doing or suffering by that illustrious fraternity to which, by the character of their piety and zeal, they belonged.—Very curious too are the various notices which may be considered as simply antiquarian. And the very copious *index* puts every part of the contents at the reader's use.

I am willing to believe that the *labor* has been a *pleasure* to you; else I should feel something very like a *commiserating* sympathy; for the industry must have been very great and protracted. Unthinking readers are little aware what it has cost an author or editor to arrange and elucidate a multitude of particulars involved in the obscurity, perplexity, and scattered variety of authorities, of the history of a distant age. As to some departments of history and biography, I never can bring myself to

\* Now Sir J. B. Williams, Knight, the Hall, Wem.

feel that it is worth while to undergo all this labor ; but with respect to *that noble race of saints*, of which the world will never see the like again (for in the *millennium* good men will not be formed and sublimed amidst persecution), it is difficult to say *what* degree of minute investigation is too much, especially in an age in which it is the fashion to misrepresent and decry them.

The *portraits*, besides being what may be believed individual likenesses, form a very characteristic addition to the work, as being so strikingly *puritanical*, not only in attire, but in the very cast and character of their looks. That is to say, one cannot help feeling that they look somehow different from what the very same countenances would have done if Mr. and Mrs. Henry had *not* been puritans,—more unworldly, more honest, more calmly firm, more absolutely good.

I trust that both the editor and the readers will be better for the more intimate acquaintance with them obtained through these researches and illustrations. I do not know what may be argued as to the extent of circulation ; but if we may believe that the reprints of religious books of the former age obtain a fair proportion of readers, there ought to be a favorable probability for a book of the same class when brought out in so greatly improved a state.

Wishing you health, and every good of the still higher order,

I am, dear Sir, Yours, very respectfully,

J. FOSTER.

CXLIV. TO JOHN EASTHOPE, ESQ., M.P.

*Stapleton, May 23, 1827.*

. . . How does the new elevation seem to agree with you ? Does the lofty character of a legislator, a senator of Great Britain, a member of that assembly where all the wisdom and virtue of a great nation is presumed to be concentrated—does it sit on you easily and gracefully ? . . . I own I am sorry you are there, from an apprehension of more evil befalling yourself than can be countervailed by the good which as an individual you can render to the nation. . . . But on which side of the house have you taken that seat ? If on the *right* side, how very queer you must feel your situation,—having gone into the house in the expectation of being in endless battle array against that fortress of power, and any gang that was likely ever to garrison it. You must feel a sad quenching of that fine ferocity with which you were prepared to stand to your gun on the assailants' battery. Can you be perfectly free from all suspicion that there is some shrewd turn of the *black art* in the case, when you, the whole tribe of you, patriots, reformers, democrats, and what not, find yourselves suddenly transported through the air, from your warlike position in *front* of Canning, to a station of alliance and fighting co-operation beside him and behind him, while he has not made so much as a hypocritical profession of any change of principles or measures ?

The riddance of a good quantity of the most rotten aristocracy from the administration is plainly enough a good thing so far. But we folks who are at a great distance from the grand central monopoly of wisdom, and therefore of slow and obtuse intellects, cannot well comprehend this zealous coalition of the avowed enemies of all corruption with a minister who has been through all times and seasons its friend and defender, —and more than so, fairly tells them, as if in easy scorn of their gullibility, that he will continue in his old course, explicitly scouting beforehand their parliamentary reform, their attempts in behalf of the dissenters, and all that. To *us* it would really seem as if this odd sort of league is made at the sole expense of what had been thought the wiser and better-meaning party; and that the reformers, the economists, &c., are consenting to forego all their best projects and even principles for the honor of being denominated . . . "his honorable friends." The nation truly is to be a mighty gainer by this famous compact.

But "catholic emancipation! catholic emancipation!" why yes, very well so far, if that, even so much as *that*, were in any likelihood to be effected; but this worthy minister has consented to abandon even that to its feeble and remote chance. For, as left to its own shifts, what chance has it in "the Lords?"

But even supposing this most virtuous and patriotic minister, backed by his scores of converts and new friends, could, would, and did carry this measure; what then? Will he alleviate the oppressive burdens of the country? Will he cut down the profligate and enormous expenditure of the government? Will he bring any of the detestable public delinquents to justice? Will he blow up a single rotten borough? Will he rout out that infernal court of chancery? Will he do anything toward creating an effective police through the country, every part of which, is every night, in complete exposure to attacks of plunderers and ruffians? Or (to glance abroad) will he do anything for Greece, or anything to real, effectual purpose for what is named the Peninsula? Nay, will he do anything at last for even amendment of the West Indies, which he has palavered so much about? No, nothing of all this. So that the good of having got this same admirable prime minister consists in—the good he will not do!

To revert to catholic emancipation (I hate that "*catholic*,"—"popery," and "*popish*," were the more proper words with our worthy ancestors) but catholic emancipation. Well, if I were on your bench or any bench in the House, I should most zealously vote for that measure; but with a very different cast of feeling from what seems to prevail among its advocates in that House. They will have it that popery, that infernal pest, is now become (if it ever was otherwise) a very tolerably good and harmless thing—no intolerance or malignity about it now—liberalized by the illuminated age—the popish priests the worthiest, most amiable, most useful of men. Nay, popery is just as good as any other religion, except some small preference for our "national establishment." Nothing so

impertinent, nothing so much to be deprecated and condemned, as the idle and mischievous fanaticism of attempting to convert papists to protestantism. To hear some of your wise men talk in that house, one would think that the reformation, some centuries back, had been almost a needless thing. "Don't be so silly and methodistical as to cant about the restoration of the Christian religion to its simplicity and purity. The popish church are just as good Christians as any of yourselves can be; and as to their claim to an entire equality of civil privileges, it has not the slightest speck of reasonable doubt upon it."

Now, my dear Sir, is not all this most infamous? Does any sensible man honestly doubt whether popery be intrinsically of the very same spirit that it ever was? Does any mortal doubt, whether if it were ever to regain an ascendancy of power, an uncontrolled dominion in this country, it would reveal the fiend, and again revel in persecution? When did ever the Romish church disavow, in the face of the world, any of its former principles, revoke any of its odious decrees, or even censure any of the execrable abominations, the burnings, the tortures, the massacres, the impostures, perpetrated under its authority? And look at its zealots even in Ireland; what is the spirit of its partizans? What is the language of its Doyle and Co.?

If I had to preface a vote in the house with a sentence or two, it would be to this effect:—"I would urge this measure most earnestly; not that I can profess to feel this demand strongly grounded on a strict claim of right; for I believe there is essentially and inseparably in popery something of deadly tendency to the welfare of a state. *That* point, however, I deem not worth debating in the present case, where the measure comes with such an overpowering claim of policy, of expediency, of utility. Without adopting this measure, you absolutely can never tranquillize the people of Ireland. And to have Ireland continuing in the condition in which it will otherwise continue, is an evil and a danger so tremendous, that any possible evil to be apprehended from the emancipation is reduced to an utter trifle in the comparison. But what evil, what danger can there be to apprehend from the emancipation? Are you so dreaming, or so lunatic, as to fancy it possible that popery, whatever civil privileges were given it, can ever acquire an ascendancy or even any material power in the British state? What! popery attain to an over-awing power, in spite of the rapidly augmenting knowledge and intelligence of the people—the almost miraculous diffusion of the Bible—the spirit of license, and fearless discussion of all subjects—the extension of religion, and of dissent from all hierarchies—with the settled deep, and general prejudice against popery into the bargain—and the wealth, power, rank, and influence, nine-tenth part of them, on the side of protestantism? How *can* you keep your countenances, how can you help laughing outright, while you are pretending to entertain any such apprehensions?"

But what presumption it is, for a sinner in an obscure country garret,

to be writing opinions about state matters to a sinner in the "*imperial parliament*!"

---

CXLV. TO THE REV. JOSIAH HILL.

*Stapleton, June 22, 1827.*

. . . . I went to pass a week or two with an old friend and relation, a physician, in order to take his advice about anything remedial or palliative for the habitual weakness and frequent painful sensations of my eyes, which are failing sadly. It often occurs to my thoughts how my John and your James are quit of all these mortal infirmities, grievances, and apprehensions; no longer involved in the frailty of our animated, endangered, and perishing clay; no longer dependant for their knowledge, their activity, their enjoyments, on these organs of matter; no longer having their "foundation in the dust." But we shall not long stay behind; we too are fast advancing toward a separation from all these elements; let us hope and sedulously prepare to meet again, in a nobler economy, those who have already arrived there, and have carried our affections with them.

. . . . I have just declined, from conscious necessity and duty, on several accounts, a journey of three weeks through North Wales, with a little party of friends at Worcester, who kindly solicited me to take a seat in a young lady's elegant one-horse vehicle, herself the driver. Snowdon! the grand chain bridge! romantic valleys, cataracts, castles, and all the rest! It would truly have been a vast luxury. But under the veto of ever so many causes combined, I am to see none of those things; some of which I did see about fifteen years since, in company with the person who is to be the leader in this new expedition, and who tells me he has never had the opportunity of inviting me under such favorable circumstances to renew the adventure, and thinks very improbable he ever may again. He is an admirable guide, and I am enthusiastic with respect to that enchanted region; but old conscience said "no," in consideration of good wife's unfortunate health and imprisonment at home in this dingy place—of studious works sadly neglected, though promised to be done long since—of the expense of such luxury; and all this corroborated by a rheumatic affection of my back, which, were it to continue or become worse, would disable me for the climbing of mountains for the purpose of seeing the panorama.

. . . . I have the most unwelcome task before me of preaching in substitution for Hall on Sunday evening; he having consented, very reluctantly, to go to London to preach two sermons for the benefit of our Bristol Academy.

---

CXLVI. TO JOHN PURSER, SEN., ESQ.

*Stapleton, 1827*

MY DEAR OLD FRIEND,—Unless Mr. Evans, who kindly offers to con-

vey this, shall happen to name the writer, it will appear to you as from the hand of a perfect stranger. Nor can I be sure you will not say that the case might just as well have been actually so, for any interest you can now feel in recalling to mind that you did once know such a person as J. Foster.

One has, on some occasions in the long course of life, felt one could say, with perfect consciousness of truth, what one could not reasonably *expect* to be believed—all appearances being so directly to the contrary. The present is such a one; so that I shall have no just cause to complain, if my declaration [is doubted] that, ever since I left Ireland to this hour, I have retained a very grateful remembrance of my old friend Mr. Purser, and of his family; concerning whom I have inquired and heard, at intervals, from various persons that I have met with, through the long period of more than *thirty years*.

It would be a vain attempt to explain (and indeed I may justly suppose you would not at all care about any explanation), how then it could have happened that I never, in any instance, gave any token of such regard as I am professing to have constantly felt. Having always been *intending* to write to you, and not *long* to delay doing so, I have sometimes thought there was some kind of spell or fatality in the case. In truth there is a certain strange power or tendency in delay to prolong and perpetuate itself. And after it has continued a considerable time, perhaps several years, there comes a feeling, that the matter of *character* is now quite a lost thing, and that therefore the case can become no worse. Something partly similar has happened with respect to one or two early friends in this country, still living, held always in friendly remembrance, never visited in the remote places of their abode, and their last letters, of a date indefinitely far in the past, remaining unanswered. But this case respecting my two Irish friends (the senior and the junior), is by much the worst in my long but unimportant history. The mortification it causes me is such, that I could almost wish to be able to introduce myself—not as an ancient friend, little deserving to be remembered as such, but as a person who has just been very much interested in hearing a particular account of you from a lady, whose sister has been with you within the last year, and who gave such an account of you that I thought I should have been much gratified to be acquainted with such a family. It recalled to my imagination once again, with a vivid freshness, the interesting social scenes and circumstances of a period lying on the *ascent* of life, on the other side as it were, of a mountain which I have long since passed over, and am now descending as my old friend also is, far down toward the low, last tract of life. But the images so revived (which, however, have never faded), were in strong contrast, in many essential points, with those presented by the description of what I should find if I were in the same scene again. One important and estimable member of the family removed from the world; a younger one long since grown up, and placed in family relations far off from you; another,

once my young friend and pupil, now in middle age, *doubly* a family man, and active in a sphere of business and various cares,—all this is so vastly different from the picture in my mind, that I have no power of thought to pass the one into the other, so as to realize this later form of the scene to my imagination. . . .

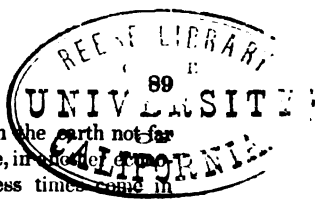
As to myself, you are not likely to have heard anything scarcely of the course of my life, marked by none but common occurrences. Since I saw Ireland I have spent several years in some, and many years in other, parts of England; in Sussex—near London—near Bristol—at Frome—at a remote place high up in Gloucestershire—and lastly, near ten years again near Bristol, to which last place I have always retained a partiality ever since I was at the academy there in my youth. In two of these places of residence I was for a considerable time a settled preacher as we call it,—at one of them, at two periods distant from each other; but in each instance was compelled to give in, by some kind of debility in the parts about the throat which rendered the constantly recurring exercise of public speaking difficult and painful. Always, however, up to this time, I have continued to preach occasionally. Just twenty years I have been a married man, with great cause to be happy in that connection. . . . We have two daughters, our only surviving children; a son who would have been now eighteen, died last year of consumption. I have great reason to be pleased at having had my lot cast, temporarily, in a variety of situations, though with no very remarkable events in any of them; since this has given me the opportunity and advantage of seeing more of the nature of things and men, than I might if fixed during the main part of life in one place. I am now in the fifty-eighth year, and feel very sensible monitions of approach to old age, especially in the decay of sight, and something in that of memory.

---

CXLVII. TO THE REV. JOSIAH HILL.

*September, 1827.*

. . . . I have cause to sympathize with your emotions in remembrance of one whom you see on earth no more; it being this week of last year that I resigned my only son. A day or two since, when left in solitude, I went up to an unoccupied room where a number of things that were his are put away; and opened once again, a box where various chemical articles remain exactly in the order in which his own hands placed them;—and thought of him as now in another world, with the questions rising again—Where? oh where? In what manner of existence? Amidst what scenes, and revelations, and society? With what remembrances of this world and of us whom he has left behind in it? Questions so often breathed, but to which no voice replies. What a sense of wonder and mystery overpowers the mind,—to think that he who was here, whose last look, and words, and breath, I witnessed,—



whose eyes I closed, whose remains are mouldering in the earth not far hence, should actually be now a conscious intelligence, in a fuller dominion of the universe! Such thoughts have numberless times come in solemn shade over *your* mind; but sometimes they have come in brightness. We have the delightful confidence that our departed sons have now infinitely the advantage of us; and that they are trusting in the divine mercy in Jesus Christ for us, that we shall one day reach their happy abodes, never again to suffer a separation. And now a year has been taken from the diminishing interval between our losing them in death, and recovering them, I trust, in immortality.

It is an all-wise and all-gracious power that presides over the appointment of those who remain to us. Not less in wisdom and goodness will it be, *if* he shall withdraw from us yet another, or another of those who remain to us. Nevertheless, I will hope that such a visitation is not approaching you. I should be gratified to hear that the one you are at present so anxiously watching for is recovering to a less endangered state.

---

CXLVIII. TO BENJAMIN STOKES, ESQ.

*March 10, 1923.*

MY DEAR SIR,—There seems to be a gloomy shade hovering over my mind since I received W——'s letter on Saturday. The image, as now lifeless, of the man that I have so often seen in the highest health and spirits, is continually presenting itself. And many times, these two days, the social scenes of his house, where I have repeatedly been received in so very kind a manner, have come with vividness to my memory. The extreme suddenness seems almost to disable the mind to realize the fact in thought. The idea of his moving rapidly on, in vigorous life to a certain spot, to one precise point, and on coming exactly thither, being, as in a moment, in another world, renders the mystery of death still more intense. And there being nothing to excite the slightest anticipation, when he set out on the journey, when he came within a mile—within a few steps of the fatal point! How true the saying, that "in the midst of life we are in death!"

It must have been an almost overwhelming shock, which each of his near relations, but above all his wife, would feel on receiving the messenger or the letter that brought the sad information. W—— intimated an apprehension of serious danger to her, on account of a frail and sinking state of health. But I hope she will not be the victim of the first dreadful emotions, or the subsequent distress and sadness. The younger portion of his family have, in their lively age, the power that counteracts in due time, the pressure of sorrow. It must appear to you all a strange and affecting circumstance, that the son, the brother, the husband, the father that was, a few days since, is now no more in any of those relations, no more to be conversed with, and, after a few days, to be seen no more on earth.



I join in the wish which will be felt by you all, that this solemn event may be rendered salutary to the best interests of those who suffer so mournful a visitation.

I feel very sensibly the kindness of your renewed invitation at this season of sorrow. I could not hesitate if the circumstances, as I will plainly describe them, did not put upon me what I think you will acknowledge to be an absolute compulsion. I say not a word about what I did mention, for one thing, in my reply to W——, the return of that incommensurable affection under which I suffered at Bourton, when I had the pleasure of seeing you there. It is a very inconvenient attendant on travelling and visiting; but I think it is beginning to yield a little to the application of what was so kindly sent me by Miss B——. At any rate I would not, after your letter, let *that* prevent my seeing you at the time I had engaged. It is this matter of Dr. Marshman's that forms the *iron* of the bondage. The case stands thus. He has found his ugly task, partly from the complication and extent of subjects involved in it, vastly more toilsome and tedious than he calculated; and now he is receiving letters day after day from friends in different quarters, expressing wonder what he can be about, telling him that he is leaving them without competent means to act efficiently as his advocates. He is therefore become painfully anxious to get the article, or rather the first and larger half of it, out very soon. As to what *himself* has now remaining to be done, he might dispense with any assistance I can give him. But the thing is that I have been inveigled into undertaking to write something in the way of *preface*, in my own name; and it has unfortunately spread into such prolixity, that it cannot now be brought to a decent ending, short of the length of a *long sermon*. A portion of it remains yet to be composed, and the whole of it to be (I dare say) *tediously* revised, transcribed, and seen through the press. My experience certifies me that this is *impossible* to be done within the short interval before the time that I had so confidently promised myself to see you at Worcester. And the interposition of a week of delay at this juncture would really be a *very serious* injury to the pressing interests of one of the best men, as I certainly believe, on earth, and combined with his the interests of Serampore. If I were to say I must go to Worcester, he is too unassuming by far to remonstrate, but he would feel extreme regret; and he is half jaded and oppressed to death already, between the tedious labor and the grievous and harassing nature of what he has been about. In addition to the disagreeable task on my hands, I must find time, if I can, to answer several of the letters which I too have received on the business.

This, my dear Sir, is the simple truth of the case. You will *partly* see the stress of it, but cannot in the same degree in which I am made sensible of it from being implicated in it. I presume that your sister and Mr. Easthope are with you, or at the house of mourning—*emphatically* such. I shall sympathize with you on the melancholy scene which is probably yet to come. How differently will the house, the gardens, the church,

and above all the family, appear from what they have ever done before!

I will not conclude without saying that I promise myself to see you at a little distance, I hope, further on in the spring—if indeed the event that darkens to you *this* period of the spring, did not warn against all confidence in projects for to-morrow.

---

CXLIX. TO THE REV. JOSIAH HILL.

*Stapleton, August 16, 1828.*

. . . . So your old war against London, in firm alliance, too, with Mrs. Hill, is to end in submission. . . . And there, said I, looking in the map of Cornwall for the situation of Camberne, and finding it at so practicable a distance from Portreath, St. Agnes, and what not, there goes away my dream of passing a few weeks with them in a locality so near that fine picturesque coast—there it goes in chace of my former dream of seeing them on the edge of the highlands of Scotland. *Sic transit gloria!*

Mrs. Hill and the young people have done wisely to take an indemnification beforehand in North Wales, for what is sacrificed in the way of nature's fine things by the surrender of Cornwall, perhaps the final surrender in respect to residence; for if you get reconciled to London, there is circuit for you after circuit, at only two or three miles distance at each remove, and still again and again the same round, till you get up to the patriarchal age of old Wesley himself. Adieu therefore now to coasts, hills, rills, and everything of that kind; henceforward it is to be, streets, smoke, fogs, and the Thames. But I hope the benefit to friend John will compensate for the difference. . . . I never did or could like that bar-busness for him, but as it is apparently his *fate*, he will be very properly desirous to bring all attainable qualifications into convergence upon it. How it would please me and vex you, if he should, after all, turn Methodist preacher, or tutor of a Methodist academy—if Baptist, better still; instead of going to lose his conscience, and perhaps morals too, among a set of the most unprincipled fellows on the earth.

. . . . There is little to be said about myself. For the last two or three months I have lost almost wholly, and I am now convinced finally, the use of one ear, from no known or conjecturable cause, and without any sort of pain. A cough which has continued as much as eight months, became, five or six weeks since, so serious and even menacing in its symptoms, in consequence of a little cold, and again another little cold, with no due care taken about a remedy, that I have been compelled to take the character of a valetudinarian and patient during the last month, have rarely gone out of the house—have not ventured to Bristol for more than a month—have taken physic, a blister on the chest, and so forth. The evil is much mitigated, but not thoroughly removed. What is called "change of air" is strongly recommended, and accor-

dingly I am going next week, if there be any tolerable alteration of this dolefully wet weather, on a short visit to Worcester, and thence probably to my medical brother-in-law at Bourton. Thence I must come to have the meeting with Dr. Marshman, who will probably not be in this part of the country afterwards. His affair having occupied me during much the greater part of the year, during which I should otherwise have been about other work, and earning a little money in that way, which I want as much as my neighbors; so that I am most miserably in arrear with certain doings which I ought to have been about, and had pledged myself to do my best to perform long since. I am therefore under every kind of obligation to try to do what I can during the descent of the year, after having been defrauded of the best and most genial part of it. Besides the usual grievance and distress which I always experience in any mental labor, there is the painful addition, that latterly my eyes are in such a state of weakness and uneasiness, that I can read very little, and am all the worse off for even thinking. Every day, and almost every hour, I am forcibly reminded, that life is fast coming toward the dregs—and will, ere long, come to its conclusion. At the same time, I have less of the former complaint of the stomach. . . . This impossibility of reading enough to be of any use (from the state of my eyes), exacerbates my mortification for the folly of having accumulated so many now useless books.

. . . . While writing the above, with the intention of despatching this sheet by to-day's post, I was somewhat chagrined by a note introducing a gentleman of the Caledonian kirk, a stranger from the neighborhood of Stirling, but luckily a mortal foe to all episcopacy; a man of large information, of large travelling, and modest to the last degree. I have been much pleased with him, and now return to my writing.

. . . . Hall was lately saying that there must infallibly be, ere long, a great alteration in the constitution of the conference; among other things, that the *laymen* will either obtain an introduction into it, or will do their best to blow it up. All this notwithstanding, I declare to you once again, that I am always glad to hear of the enlarging extension of the Methodists, from my uniform conviction that (with no small discount for harm) they are on the whole doing great good. . . .

---

CL. TO THE REV. JOSIAH HILL.

Sept. 13, 1828.

It would be an irrational presumption to reckon on it, that we and our two inestimable female associates shall all be found on this earth at the end of the six years next to come. Within that period past there has gone away, from each of our little families, *one* individual that *was* with us, but whom we shall see no more till after we shall also have passed the dark frontier. The mind sometimes makes an effort to pass that

limit in thought, and look into the mysterious region, to descry the manner of existence of those who *did* so lately live with us, and in our own manner. But we are compelled to retire from the precincts of that scene, in hopeless inquisitiveness and unabated ignorance; but this ignorance will not last long; and meanwhile, how delightful is it to believe, that those our lost ones are in a far happier state than any of us inhabitants of the dust.

---

OLI. TO JOHN PURSER, JUN., ESQ.

Sept. 30, 1828.

MY DEAR SIR,—I am just returned from an excursion of rather protracted duration in Gloucestershire, Worcestershire, &c., recommended for the purpose of trying to escape from an obstinate and ill-omened cough. A day or two before I set out I began a letter to you, which I reckoned on sending before I went, but several matters came in the way, and the paper was laid aside, in an expectation of being back here in little more than a fortnight, instead of, as it happened, nearly three times that length of absence. A letter, received at Worcester from my wife, informed me that a young gentleman, your son, had been here. I regretted having thus been prevented seeing him, and still more so, on now hearing her description of the intelligent and manly character apparent in the transient visitor.

But *your* son, a young man of mature age,—I seem to be unable to realize the fact; all my ideas fix on yourself, as a youth very much in minority of age, and I cannot carry on my imagination, through the succession of events from that period, so long past, to the present state of your condition.

My dear friend, your shrewdness will have perceived, how I am contriving to slide into the letter, without accounting first for the long silence since I received yours, which, with your father's, gave me the most animated gratification. But for explaining—that cannot be, that is quite impossible, unless you could (and you cannot) shape to yourself a conception of such a disease of procrastination, as you never saw exemplified, in any equal degree, in any person whom you can have had within your habitual and prolonged observation. To be sure it is a *moral* disease, but it has clung to me with all the tenacity of a natural and constitutional one.

I will, however, repeat, with what a strong emotion of pleasure I received the communications from Dublin, a pleasure which I certainly intended to express without delay. Some mortification I acknowledge mingled with the pleasure. The warm kindness of my old friends had the effect of giving edge to my self-accusation; and this, in truth, however perversely, operated somewhat concurrently with the tendency of the disease of which I have been complaining; but now I am recognized as an old

friend, and will gratefully take my position accordingly. I will try to place myself, as now an old man, near you, now a man in middle age, but appearing to me, whether I will or not, and however I may strive to change the aspect and situation, in the image of a youth of fifteen, nothing less than seeing you will set me right; and as my remembrance of you, and of our diversified intercourse at that time, are among the most distant of the things that remain with me from the long past, I am certain I should, in the event of seeing you, have to combat with a very strange confusion of ideas, and that the *one* person would very obstinately for a long time, be *two*; indeed, perhaps always. It would, however, be very interesting to me to hear from you very minutely, as means of identification, the long history of the progress of events during the blank interval of so large a breadth of time. I should recount, to see whether or how much you recollected in coincidence with me, a number of the particulars, the adventures, the debates, the juvenile fancies, which stand representative in my mind, of the young friend of a third part of a century back.

It would be highly interesting to me to see your family, and you in the midst of them, and Mrs. Purser, whom I so well recollect as Miss Allen, who did not much like me, at which I am far from wondering; and, indeed, think she was considerably in the right, for certainly I was a queer article in those times. I can recollect what an indifferent figure I cut in divers respects and situations. I should be much amused to recall some of them with her, if she had any marked remembrance of any of them. But, my good friend, neither did she, at that time, much like *you*; and it would have seemed an extremely improbable event, that you should ever have become united in the most intimate relation of life. I was pleased at hearing, last summer, that a thing so unlikely had actually come to pass, and am happy to believe I may most justly congratulate you both; and I most cordially wish you may very long contribute to each other's happiness.

It is gratifying that you appear to have cause for so much satisfaction in viewing your family; when I see so many parents, on every hand, afflicted with apprehension and sorrow on account of their children; insomuch that I have acquired a feeling which (tacitly perhaps) congratulates parents on the early removal of their children by death. This is not from any painful experience of my own. . . . My eldest, who would now have been a young man of about nineteen, died of consumption two years since; and left the consolation of an assured hope that he is removed to a higher, happier region. He had previously been, though with very minor faults, an object of considerable solicitude, in consideration of what a world of temptation he was (as it was mistakenly presumed) entering into; a world quite dreadful in its aspect on the character and destinies of young men. He departed in humble, pious hope, and I have never wished him here again—have felicitated him rather on his final escape from all sorrow and sin. . . .

It would be a high gratification to me, to hear those opinions of men and things which you have been forming and maturing throughout the more than thirty years since I saw you : it would be curious and interesting to see how far our general or particular notions, preferences, or aversions, would coalesce, after our having so long passed through different trains and scenes of observation and experience. From the early acuteness and intelligence, of which I have so perfect a recollection, I am sure you cannot have failed to be a keen observer and independent thinker, whilst a vast variety of moral phenomena have passed before your view. Your early sentiments were forming to a cast not greatly varying from my own ; and I cannot help flattering myself that we should, in many points, find ourselves at this time in agreement, even after so immensely long a dissociation. Have you taken a considerable or a lively interest, in political events and subjects ? if so, you have suffered a long course of grievous mortifications, especially in relation to your own country ; and in what a fearful state is that country at this hour ! I cannot be sure, but am strongly inclined to presume, that you think the whole system of the government respecting it, bears a character of absolute infatuation ; that a "lying spirit" has prompted and directed all their councils : and with such a ministry as we have now, for a judgment sent on the nation, it is gloomy, and, indeed, quite dreadful, to look forward to the course and issue of things in Ireland.

You have lately had, in Dublin, Dr. Marshman. . . . That Serampore affair has, during the last twelve months, occupied my time and attention to a very self-sacrificing extent ; and, I am afraid, to very little useful purpose.

. . . . After reading the principal of these opponent publications, I have to say, that my opinion is modified in some points. For one thing, as to the alienation or hostility between the seniors and the junior missionaries ; the testimony thus produced of the feelings of *so many* of these latter does lead me to believe that the fault was not so *wholly* on their side as Dr. M. represents, and certainly thinks. At the same time it is to be considered that all this is their own story, that they went to India with no proper information, and with expectations which were necessarily disappointed, and that many of the circumstances stated in accusation are such (I know that some are such) as the seniors could so state as to turn the accusation on the juniors. . . . Yet I admit the impression that in some degree, not possible to be precisely assigned, there was cause to complain of the manner in which the seniors exercised, in some particulars, their rightful ascendancy. Another thing to be admitted is, that the coalescence, the unanimity of sentiment among the three seniors, has not been so perfect and entire as had been supposed, while *substantially* and *generally*, they have, beyond all question, coincided in sentiment, purpose, and plan of proceeding. But how carelessly, indiscreetly, and sometimes inconsistently, they have each and all (the three) written to their friends, at various times ! But these dis-

crepancies are the produce of a ransack of (I have heard) 700 letters and papers. What might not be the result of such a ransack for such an exclusive purpose, of *any* three associated men's writings during nearly thirty years' co-operation? Another point which these documents show, somewhat more plainly and strongly than Dr. M. had stated, is, that in the indigested and undefined state of their early notions of their situation, relatively to the society, they had not come to a distinct and positive principle of independence till after a very considerable advance of time. . . . But their solid ground on this question is, that from nearly the beginning they *acted* independently in all manner of ways, and in very important and even hazardous matters, in which they practically held themselves under no control of the society, not seeking either its assistance or its counsel. But these are minor matters, which, however, as I foresaw, would be labored against the Serampore men, to keep out of sight the great substance and mass of their achievements and merits, namely, that they have most indefatigably labored for nearly thirty years for the Christian service, that they have faithfully expended all they have acquired in every way in and upon that service, and that finally they have nothing for themselves—excepting still to labor, through the remainder of life, whether through “evil report” or “good report.” . . .

. . . . But for this obtrusive and endless topic, I should have said something in express answer and acknowledgment to my old, excellent, and always dear friend, your father. . . . He and I, I do certainly believe, are the same men that we were almost an age since; but doubtless we should, if we met, feel mutual and strange wonder to see the operation of time. We shall not long now remain under that operation. Eternity is beginning to throw on us its mysterious gleams, through the growing shades of our evening life. . . .

I wish to express—I will not say my respects, but my friendly regards to your wife, the Miss Allen (it certainly must be so) of long since times. . . . It is affecting information that my old friend and companion, H. Strahan, is no more.

Yours, most truly and cordially,

J. FOSTER.

CLII. TO THE REV. JOSIAH HILL.

December 15, 1828.

. . . . For the *evenings*, I have been a prisoner all the autumn, and must be all the winter—rigorously so. A cold and cough, confirmed from time to time, last winter and spring, has been partially removed by the whole fine summer; during which I took more than a month's excursion, in parts of Gloucestershire, Worcestershire, and Herefordshire, under the most favorable auspices possible of weather, hospitable friends, and care, avoidance of all evening parties, and exemptions from public

exercises. The cough at one time had very ill-omened symptoms, as evidently betraying an affection of the lungs. I am strictly ordered to keep out of the evening damp and cold,—never go into the town in the evening, not even to hear Hall—and take every sort of care. The cough is very much diminished, and I expect that continued care will remove the remainder. Within the last half-year I have lost (so nearly wholly, as to amount to quite the same thing) the hearing of one ear, without any known cause, without pain, but in such a manner as renders it certain it will always remain lost. And all my poor teeth are gone, but three or four that are soon to follow. Otherwise I am in much better health than two or three years since.

Good wife is in the same feeble, ailing, but patient way. I could not tell you in any moderate number of words, or pages, or sheets, the state of the Serampore affair. That affair has been sadly and utterly consuming my time and attention for the whole past year—a vast number of labored letters to write, &c. &c.

Hall has had a whole year of most miserable suffering, under his old complaint. In other points of health he seems tolerably well, and no decadence in mind.

## CLIII. TO THE REV. JOSIAH HILL.

[On the death of Mrs. Hill.]

*Stapleton, December 26, 1828.*

WHAT shall I—can I—say to my dear old friend, on whom the hand of God has been so heavily and mysteriously laid? This has been the question with me from day to day, while each returning morning I have been resolving not to let the day pass without an attempt to speak to him in terms of commiseration; and still a constant feeling of utter impotence has frustrated my resolution. To *Him* alone who has afflicted, it belongs to impart the merciful influence to sustain you under the overwhelming calamity. And I pray him to enable you to yield yourself up to him in resignation, and repose on him for support. May all that you so firmly believe, and have so often cogently taught, of the consoling efficacy in the divine goodness, be realized to you now, in your season of deepest distress! It is all true—you *know* in whom you have believed—and that he is all-sufficient to console his servants, in the most painful and melancholy scenes in which his own sovereign dispensations may place them. He does not bring them under oppressive trials to desert them there, and leave them to their own feeble strength. He *will* not leave you; he *can* sustain you—and I trust he will give you power to lay hold on him for strength.

From your letter previous to the last, I could not help admitting some dark and painful forebodings; insomuch that the external signs on your last gave a strong intimation of what it was to tell me. Yet I had, till



receiving it, indulged some little hope that our dear friend might be recalled from the fatal brink, to remain a companion and blessing to her family. But the sovereign authority, the voice which angels and saints obey, still called onwards. She was appointed for other society. She has now entered into it,—in a scene whence all her warm affection for those she has left behind (an affection, we may well believe, inextinguishable by death) would not move in her happy spirit a wish to return. In that society no doubt she has joined, for one dear and happy associate, her admirable son who had gone before, as if on purpose to congratulate her on her arrival. If you could know the heavenly rapture of those mutual felicitations! “Too happy,” you would say, “too happy *there* for me to wish those beloved beings were, even for my sake, again in a world like this. Rather let me patiently go on my journey, deprived of their loved companionship, till I shall obtain it again, where I can never lose it more.” How soon the few fleeting years of our life will be gone! Oh that they may, through the discipline of the divine spirit, be a process to prepare us to mingle in the felicities of our departed, sainted friends, and gratefully exulting in the presence of Him who has exalted them from this sinful world to his own blessed abodes! I have lived for several years in the apprehension of being visited by such a dispensation as that under which you are suffering, and there has been a degree of consolation in the thought, that I am too far advanced in life for the deprivation, if it should be inflicted, to be a loss of very long duration.

By this time, what was mortal of our dear friend has been consigned to its resting-place in darkness and silence; and I can pensively sympathize in the profound musings in which your spirit is drawn to follow the immortal part. Oh, what is the transition? Whither is that immortal essence gone? In what higher manner does it live, and know, and exert its faculties no longer involved in the dark tabernacle of dying flesh? Our departed friend does not come to reveal it to us. But enough to know that it is a deliverance from all pains, and weakness, and fears—a deliverance from sin, that most dreadful thing in the universe. And it is to be past death—to have accomplished that one amazing act which we have yet undone before us, and are to do. It is to know what that awful and mysterious thing is, and that its pains and terrors are gone past for ever. “I have died,” our beloved friend says now, with exultation, “and I live to die no more! I have conquered through the blood of the Lamb.” . . . .

I am, dear sir, yours, with sincerest wishes for the only divine and effectual consolation to be yours,  
J. F.

---

CLIV. TO THE REV. JOSIAH HILL.

*January, 1829.*

MY DEAR SIR,—Your mournful letter was from a place of sojourn which had not been suggested to my imagination. . . . I have no doubt

of your experiencing at Liverpool the most affectionate sympathy, . . . but I have some fear that the very *remoteness* from the scene of calamity may but augment the painful difficulty of your returning to your station—to your *station of service*, for to the same residence there can be no question or practicability of returning. . . . Wherever you fix or remove, it is affecting to consider what a changed condition divine Providence has appointed to accompany you. In every former movement and station during a very long lapse of time, you have been accompanied by one of the dearest and most affectionate friends that any mortal was ever favored to possess. Whatever else you found untoward, whoever else might be unamiable or ungracious, *she* was ever good and kind. It is now appointed to you that no longer herself, but her memory is to accompany you—a memory ever dear and cherished, present every day and hour, presenting her image as still smiling tenderly upon you, but, therefore, still telling you what you have lost. But yet this will not be *all* that the beloved vision will tell you. It will represent to you that she herself still lives; that she has ceased to live with you, only because her heavenly Father required her presence in a higher abode; that she waits for you there, admonishing you to be, meanwhile, patient and zealous in accomplishing your appointed term of duty and trial, as she has accomplished hers; and that every day and hour of this your faithful progress brings you nearer to a happy and eternal re-union. While you can no longer live for her, may you the more live to that supreme and eternal Friend to whom and with whom *she* now lives, more happily and nobly than the highest attainment of any of his servants while yet sojourning on earth. You will often fall into profound and earnestly inquisitive musings on the state of being into which she has made the mysterious transition. What is it to have passed through death, and to be now looking upon it as an event *behind*—an event from which she is every moment further removing; when so lately, when but a few days since, she was every moment, as all mortals are, approaching nearer and nearer to it? What must be the thoughts, the emotions, on closely comparing these two states, under the amazing impression of actual experience? How many dark and most interesting and solemn *questions* (as they are to us—as they recently were to her) are now, to her, questions no longer! And would her happy spirit wish it possible and permitted, to convey to you and her children some part of the knowledge which has thus, since she left you, come upon her like the rising sun? No; she sees it not proper; that it would not be for the welfare of those she has left behind and still loves: but delights to anticipate that the time will come for them to attain this glorious and marvellous light, like her, and with her. And if it may be presumed that, while assuredly nothing that is taking place on earth can cause her *pain*, it may consist with the economy of that state, that she shall derive *pleasure* from what is in progress in the scene she has left, nothing—except the general triumph of her Redeemer's cause—nothing will administer more joy than her husband's and her children's advancing

on the way to heaven. To *them*, her children, I trust this affecting event will be made a powerful confirmation and enforcement of all their best convictions and resolutions. It is thus only that such an irreparable loss can be compensated to them ; so that their loss shall be not only *her* gain, but *theirs* also.

When you shall have recovered composure enough to resume public labors, the activity and frequent exercise, with its varieties of place, will be beneficial to you. At present it may often seem to you that you can never again have spirit and vigor of mind enough for such activity ; but, though pensive and desolate feelings will often invade you, I trust that the *compelled* exertions of your office will contribute to break the *continuity* of your sorrow, and aid the softening effect of time ; while religion, above all, will impart the consolations which you will often have to assure your hearers that the afflicted must seek and will find, in that best resource. You will have to assure them—and may you have the happy experience of it—that the divine mercy and support are all-sufficient. . . .

---

CLV. TO JOHN EASTHOPE, ESQ.

February 24, 1829.

At this one turn, I have the greatest delight in adverting to the political business in your St. Stephen's chapel. The dictators there have for once been dictated to. They pretend indeed to kick at the imputation of *fear*, of acting under dire compulsion, and all that ; but the Catholic Association knows better. But never mind either motives or pretences, so the good thing be done. How baffled are all our calculations ! We deplored Canning's extinction ; whereas Canning declared he *would* not help the late claims of the Dissenters ; and it seems doubtful whether he *could* in a Whig ministry, even making the Catholic business "a cabinet measure," as they call it, whether he actually could have carried this most important point. And now, here is a driving, dashing fellow of the sword, from whom we expected nothing for Ireland but a Brunswick manifesto and a host of bayonets—and the thing is done at a stroke. Here too is Peel, as staunch as any rock or stock against the whole affair—and a complete Tory ministry, adverse to political liberty in all shapes and places—here we have them doing the very thing which all the bigots and anti-reformists were exulting to have them in power again from the confidence that they *would be sure never to do*.

Still I am somewhat in fear till I see the business over, that there will be, to please the poor creatures who are afraid lest we should be all burnt alive, some invidious and ungracious *drawback*, under the name and notion of "securities"—a most ridiculous notion and term—as if there could be any securities but those consisting in the good-will of the Irish people, and the wisdom, equity, and strength of the Protestant nation and government. You will see some fine battling, fine canting, fine ratting,

and fine mortification. For once you will have the delight of seeing the *power* on the right side, so new and exhilarating a circumstance after you have so many times heard a good cause (this one and others) vigorously advocated with the desponding, sullen reflection all the while, that it was all lost labor.

---

## CLVI. TO THE REV. JOSIAH HILL.

*Stapleton, March 25, 1829.*

. . . You have probably by this time come to something like a settled general plan ; and when you have done so, we shall be greatly interested to know how it bears. To all the places of your successive residences during the last twenty and more years, your thoughts will revert with the pensive, painful consciousness that none, not the most agreeable of them, would be the same to you again, if you were there ; that there would be wanting *one* interest, the sweetest and dearest (except piety) that you enjoyed in each of those scenes. How many vivid remembrances would places and objects raise and press on your mind ! I have often imagined to myself how you would feel (and indeed, how I myself should feel) at the cottage and each spot in the vicinity of that favorite Little Haven, where has so often been seen, and where would be seen no more, that countenance so kind, so benignant ; where at moments there would be almost the expectation of hearing—but there would not be heard—that voice, expressive of every gentle and amiable sentiment, uttering some affectionate wish, or some considerate suggestion, for the pleasure or advantage of each friend in the little company ; with a generous disinterestedness, a forward readiness to sacrifice her own convenience, which has always struck me as pre-eminently conspicuous in the character of her who is now gone to a congenial region and society—a region and society where her gentle and generous spirit is emphatically *at home*. That “she is here no more,” will be the affecting and painful thought in every place you can visit where she has been your loved associate ; but then, let faith take up the words, and *tell where she is*, and where she will affectionately wait to receive those she has left behind. . .

---

## CLVII. TO B. STOKES, ESQ.

*April 30, 1829.*

THERE is little to be said about the Serampore affair. . . . My estimate of the main and substantial merits of the case remains unchanged. The *modification* of opinion which I have been led to admit, on *apparently* sufficient evidence, is, that Dr. M.'s family and domestic arrangements have latterly taken somewhat too much of a *stylish* cast, through an indulgence of the young people's taste for the *genteel*. Not that I believe that this has gone at all beyond what is vastly common among our good

people, and good non-cons., in this country, whose means would admit of it; but the thing is, that a quite different standard is, and resolutely will be applied to a *mission family*, avowedly acting, and really *having* acted, on a principle of *entire* self-devotement to the Christian cause. In consideration of the use that will infallibly and very *effectually* be made of any even small deviation from this high principle, by the enemies, I have urgently inculcated on Dr. M. the wisdom of excluding at his return, any real excess of show and style.”\*

---

CLVIII. TO B. STOKES, ESQ.

December 5, 1829.

MY DEAR SIR,— . . . . The last time of my being at Worcester, I left you with very irksome feelings, on account of having declined even so much as one instance of compliance with the friendly requests for a public service of any kind. Not exactly that I reproached myself for not having complied, but an indistinct mingled mortification respecting it altogether, as what would appear an unfriendly thing to *you personally*; for as to the *ministers*, my acquaintance had been so small as to make it a different case from what it would be with some old familiar friend, like *Coles*, with whom I had had a sort of social connection for many long years continuously. . . . . It may seem strange enough, and indeed, no good symptom of character, that I should feel such extreme repugnance to such services. And I am perfectly aware that more candor than I could expect from any one but yourself and Mrs. Stokes, would be requisite for allowing any validity to my explanation;—that, having been so long out of the practice of preaching, I have come to feel very great inaptitude, except for some such thing as an off-hand talk in some of our village meeting-houses—that, from infrequency in part, it is in *such places alone* that I could feel myself in any degree at ease in such off-hand work—that, having next to no memory at all, it is in vain for me to make any preparation, beyond a few written sentences, of which, as suggestions, I am to make just what I can at the time, and that I can *make nothing* of them except where much at my ease from the *pitch* and quality of the auditors—and that, in addition, I have great difficulty, from failure of sight for near objects, to make out even the largely-scribbled lines on my paper—that, therefore, I have everything against me for making anything of the exercise but a cause of mortifi-

\* “This is matter not reducible to any strict rules of propriety. Our well conditioned and genteelish non-cons would spurn at any such prescriptions and interdictions; but the high and devoted character assumed by the Serampore fraternity, and the very invidious circumstances in which they were placed, rendered it an important and evident law of prudence, to maintain as much as possible of even a *puritanic simplicity and unworldliness* in their economy.”—*Mr. Foster to the Rev. J. Fawcett*, April 24, 1830.

cation to myself, and, as an inevitable consequence, to my friends among the auditors. I have spoken the literal truth about *preparation and memory*. Even in the Bristol lectures some years back, my preparation did not go one inch beyond the bare written scheme, which might have been read in perhaps a quarter of an hour or twenty minutes. I was long enough in writing those bare schemes—often as much as three days; but even then, under very considerable responsibility, I never could do anything at all in the way of what may be called *filling up*. That would have far more than doubled the time, and besides, such endless labor would have been nearly useless, as I was absolutely certain that I should retain no recollection, to any purpose, of what I might have so prepared. But the consequence was, the constant hazard of failure, which sometimes did take place in a most mortifying degree. So that between such toil and such liability to failure notwithstanding, I was glad to make an end of the service. The truth is, that it costs me—or rather *would* cost me—more labor than any other preacher alive, to do that which, in one sense, I am able to do, able, that is to say, supposing all circumstances favorable. All this being thus matter of unpleasant experience, I have fully declined all preaching but such little village work as I have mentioned; and even that is now of rare occurrence, in consequence of there being a settled minister now at the place to which I used oftenest to go. In Bristol I believe I shall never preach again. I have told the friends so, in such honest terms, that I am now never applied to, except that I was asked to make one sermon at Broadmead, during Hall's absence, which I refused. . . .

---

CLIX. TO JOHN PURSER, JUN., ESQ.

1830.

. . . . I do not know whether you saw much of Dr. Marshman in his visit (there were, I think, two visits) to Dublin. . . . Uniformly, and in all places, we have observed him indisposed in an *uncommon* degree, to magnify or dilate upon his own services. I never knew a man who had done half so much who would admit to it half so little. I was struck with the fact, and have often mentioned it, that days and weeks might have passed away in conversational companies (in which the subject of Serampore was not formally, and by express requisition of the party, made the matter of discourse), without any person's being made aware that Dr. M. had ever done anything in the least remarkable. He would talk largely of *India* in all its relations, but what he had done there would uniformly be the very last thing of which he would speak. Often, in such companies, he would not speak of it at all, unless in answer to some direct inquiry. When he did speak of Serampore, as led to it formally and necessarily by the object and intention of the meeting, it was *always* in the most moderate terms as respecting him-

self. He habitually merged himself in the partnership—"the union;" and in all ways, and on all occasions, without the least sign of affectation, gave the precedence to Dr. Carey. One of the most marked characteristics of pride is high-toned contempt, or indignant reaction to imputations, reproaches, depreciations, &c. Now I never saw so little of this in any other mortal man, who was the object of censure, injustice, and abuse. The contrary temper in him was so remarkable, that I used to be curious to discover wherein it consisted; how much of it was a Christian patience and quietude, and how much an unsensitiveness of natural constitution. I thought there must be much of the latter, from the uniformity, nearly, of the phenomenon. I have myself used more rough language to him, and quite in serious driving earnest, than I ever did to any other man in all my life, and have been amazed how he could take it all without bristling into anger, an effect which I never witnessed but in one instance; in which I doggedly, and, I believe, fiercely, traversed and contradicted him, in a particular explanation. I have often thought exactly this—that *he had not pride enough to give him a dignified and manly bearing, to make himself be treated with anything like the due deference and respect.* Ward I know, and Carey I believe, would have allowed no such liberties as were taken by Dr. M. without reaction, and with perfect impunity. Really, I was sometimes ashamed for his tameness, as *letting him down* from the proper degree and tone of manly dignity and respectability. And often enough I wondered, reflectively, *how it could be* that I could, involuntarily, be so divested of respectful feeling, and of the appropriate manners and language, toward a man, whose excellence and practical services I rated, with the most perfect conviction, so eminently high. And a chief cause I still found to be, his want of a certain *manly assumption*, which partakes of the *noti me tangere*, and the *nemo me impune lacessit*.

There are other things in the case certainly. His manners are somewhat uncouth; his theological language is of the humblest old school; his intellect is not vigorous or acute; and he has, in regard to the affairs and persons in a state of hostility, a dread, carried to excess, of direct, bold, uncompromising conflict. To effect things by management; to carry a purpose without firmly avowing it; to persist in a design (for he is very pertinacious) under a silence which might have led opponents to imagine he had relinquished it; to assign but in part his reasons for it; to endeavor to frustrate an opponent's design in the *quietest* way possible; to raise an obstacle from circumstances, rather than to make a direct, bold opposition or attack; to wear out the time, instead of putting an affair promptly to hazard; to prefer, in all cases, caution to boldness; to temporize sometimes to a fault; such I can well believe to have been, in India, the policy which has brought on him such a violence of censure and opprobrium. . . . Such is the policy which Dr. Carey himself is cited as having (in a letter of old date) denominated "crooked," but with no *emphasis* of disapproval, as is manifest from his firm, unal-

terable attachment to his colleague from first to last. He did not *like* this policy, it was not quite agreeable to the plain straightforwardness of his own character ; but he did not at all regard it as *vicious in principle*, only an unlucky peculiarity of character in a man who was upright in his motives and objects ; a man who was devotedly and disinterestedly faithful to the great cause, and whose services to it were important, incessant, and indefatigable. In that very same letter of Dr. Carey, the paragraph describing the said "crooked policy" was immediately followed by an expression, in strong terms, to this effect :—"notwithstanding any such faults in my colleague, *my best wish for the mission is, that it may never want a Marshman.*"\*

. . . . But now after all, as to Dr. M., am I pretending *wholly* to justify him ? no ; for one thing, I do not *like* that same which I have adverted to, as what has been denominated "crooked policy ;" though I assuredly believe, that his prevailing motive in practising it, has been to serve the good cause, by avoiding collisions and explosions, and getting the work quietly forward. I believe too, that in some critical conjunctures, mischiefs and dangers have been thus evaded, when a different manner of proceeding would, in all probability, have incurred them. For another thing I am convinced, by a comparison of testimonies, that . . . he has latterly allowed, or more correctly not prevented, as much as he might and should, the growth of a certain stylishness and affectation of genteel life in his domestic establishment. But, not to say how difficult parents are everywhere finding it to dictate discretion and taste to their young folks, and shape their habits to a primitive or philosophic standard, especially if any of them should be of the utmost use and necessity in the establishment ; not to insist on this, I believe the show and stylishness in question and in accusation, to be nothing more than what is practised or aspired to by very many of our good Christian people, who are in what are called handsome circumstances. The unfortunate thing is, that this genteel style of life, being admitted into an establishment which was long retained on a system of rigorous economy, and constituted on an avowed and permanently obligatory rule, of strictly "devoting all to God"—obligatory, that is to say, from voluntary pledge and vow—has afforded an occasion (vastly exaggerated in the representation) for making the charge of a dereliction of the original missionary spirit, and a degeneration into worldly character and habits. . . . But now, after all, look at all this ; admit that he has the weakness of such an overweening partiality for his family, as to allow them in some things which he had much better have

\* "Brother Marshman's excellences are such that his defects are almost concealed by them ; and I believe him to be one of the firmest friends the mission ever had ; and I hope the mission may never stand in want of one like him."—*Dr. Carey to Dr. Ryland, April 11, 1818.* "In point of zeal he is a Luther, and I an Erasmus."—*May 24, 1810.* "Brother Marshman, who is naturally a little tortuous, but than whom a more excellent and holy man does not exist." . . . *May 30, 1816. From the same to the same.*



restrained; and that the tenor of his policy has not been frank, bold, and manly (while, as I feel the most perfect conviction, *systematically and honestly intended for the best*), what a trifling deduction is this from the merit of more than a quarter of a century of indefatigable labor for the service of Christianity, prosecuted in the oppressive climate of India too, with no view to either emolument or fame! Think of one item, the translation of the whole Bible into Chinese, as but a very minor portion of the quantum of his disinterested labors. I can express the more confidently my exceedingly high estimate of him from the circumstance, that he is *not a man to my taste*, as to matter of taste. He is not a man of taste, sentiment, imagination, discrimination, play and reach of thought, free speculation, strong understanding, literary cultivation, or manly cast of deportment; it is his substantial, faithful, Christian excellence, on which my estimate and complacency rest.

. . . Believe me, my dear Sir, I am vexed, ashamed, and I know not how many more words I might add, to have been led into this tediousness of observation. I have no knack of despatch. And besides I confess I *did* wish to contribute something in aid of what I thought a correct opinion in a man of whose judgment I have reason to think so highly as of yours, in reference to a matter which is evidently of some importance, as affecting the character and interests of what will be by far the most memorable missionary adventure of our age. I can have no manner of interest about it, but simply as a well-wisher to a good cause, under present adverse circumstances. It has consumed as much (all put together) as a whole year of my waning life, and while I had many reasons (a pecuniary one not excepted) claiming that I should be very differently occupied. Mine has been a great and gratuitous sacrifice.

No future letter to you will be filled with anything so foreign to friendly correspondence. I could not adjust matters so as to allow at this time the visit to Dublin, which I am willing and gratified to promise myself at a more favorable season, if life continue. I was pleased, not at all surprised, at your coincidence with me in opinion about dissenting ordinations, and also about a widely different matter, the principles of Wellington's policy in the measure so favorable to Ireland. One cannot help suspecting that one of his chief motives was a wish to have the military force of the country more disposable for aid (under possible circumstances), to support that infernal Mahomedan domination in the east of Europe, which one earnestly wishes—all mere political calculations out of the question—to see crushed by the Russian invasion. Under sanction of that old humbug, "the balance of power," and to present some *eventually possible* inconvenience to our trade to the Levant—that is to say, reduced to plain terms, some pecuniary disadvantage—our government would not scruple to sink the nation a hundred millions deeper in debt. But Ireland again; who would have thought that the session of Parliament, commencing with the beneficial *political* measure, would pass off without one particle of anything done for the internal relief and im-

provement of your miserable population—some plan for cultivating the waste land, or providing for the ejected cottagers? . . . Unfortunate Ireland, and England too, in having, from generation to generation, a set of statesmen and a court who care really nothing for the public good, any otherwise and further than as it may serve the production of revenue! Still the world, our part of it included, is destined to mend. The sovereign Ruler over all has declared so. And the present extraordinary diffusion of knowledge, accompanied, we may hope, by augmentation of religion; the *mobility* so visible in the state of the world, the trembling and cracking of parts of the old fabric—the prostration of some of the inveterate tyrannies; these are surely signs that the changing and meliorating process is at least beginning. When our race arrive at such a state as prophecy unquestionably predicts, what will they, can they, think of the preceding ages and of ours!

I am gratified by all you express of the happiness you enjoy in your family, and especially in the merits and valuable assistance of your eldest son, whom I am again sorry not to have seen when he was here. I hope that all these satisfactions will increase with their and your advancing life, and that they will be largely shared by my old friend, for I will call her so, and should be extremely pleased and interested to see her again as now under the character and name of Mrs. Purser, to whom I request you to express my very kind regards and best wishes for her health and happiness.

And then there is my old, ever remembered and estimable friend, your father, who, I dare say, is pleased with you all together. What I am a little sorry for is, that I fear he has deserted our poor old Swift's Alley. Is there no inducing him to return; provided, I mean, that your people there should behave themselves well under the new settlement you are going to make; I would be remembered to him in the strongest terms of most friendly, grateful, and unalterable regard. . . .

---

CLX. TO JOSEPH COTTLE, ESQ.

[In answer to a letter animadverting on his language respecting the established church.]\*

March, 1830.

MY DEAR SIR,—Allow me to beg you, first to accept my most sincere thanks for the kind spirit and intention of your letter; and next, to take

\* Bristol, March, 1830.

MY DEAR SIR,—To renew the subject on which we lately conversed, and had the misfortune amicably to differ; namely, the *church of England*. It would be inconsistent in me, as a dissenter, not to admit, that our religious services are more conformable with the primitive church than the establishment; but the liberty of private judgment which we exact from others, we must also grant. I dislike intolerance, in whatever form it displays itself. There are wise and holy men who deem the church of England the concentration of excellence. On the contrary, I take it to be.

in perfect good part, a few sentences, which respect for my excellent friend, and (perhaps I may think) justice to myself, may seem to require of me. I remember the conversation to which you refer, and remember too, that I was stimulated to a certain something like vehemence

not "a milk-white hind," but Dryden's "spotted panther," yet still a service of the "true church." . . .

Will you allow one of equal years, but very inferior pretensions, to suggest for your calm consideration, whether you do not extend your strictures on the church, sometimes, rather too far? I am no advocate for frippery and *popish* decorations, and ordinances; immense revenues to dronish bishops, while the inferior clergy are often worse paid than mechanics, although they are in general as well educated, and possess tastes as refined, as their diocesans. Pluralities also, I am willing to allow, are carried to an unjustifiable extent, to the great prejudice of meritorious curates. And I must, in justification of myself, as a non-conformist, express, among other things, a decided objection to the burial service; to that part of the church catechism, where the sprinkling of a few drops of water, perhaps by an irreligious clergyman, converts, as it is supposed, the recipient into a "member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven." This baptismal regeneration is not more opposed to scripture than it is to common sense. Apostolic succession, also, is regarded even by some dignitaries of the church, with as much disfavor as it is by myself. But all this, and more, may be admitted without *invective*, in which there is no argument. Excuse me in saying, I do think you err in this respect. Are we not Christians? and must we not exhibit the mind of Christ, who, "when he was reviled, reviled not again," and by which spirit his disciples are to be distinguished? . . .

You seem to consider the establishment as combined with unmitigated evil. I, on the contrary, regard it, with all its faults (by which I shall certainly please *neither party*), as productive of a great preponderance of good; nor, on the whole, do I ever desire to see the day, when there shall be no *establishment*; or rather an establishment of *Independents, Methodists, or Baptists*. Neither of them would bear their faculties more meekly than the present hierarchy. Scholars and gentlemen, as the generality of clergymen are, although many of them may not have attained to a knowledge of the truth, in its highest sense, they still soften the charities of life, and being scattered through the thinly-peopled districts, convey a knowledge of Christianity, often by their sermons, but always by their prayers, where, otherwise, it is to be feared, there would be heathenish darkness; so that in the present condition of society, I cannot but regard the church as producing more good than harm. With these views, it is always painful to my mind to hear harsh and indiscriminate reflections passed on the establishment. It is engrafted in my very nature, not to do unnecessary violence to the feelings, and even prejudices, of any man. The same bias of mind makes me restrain severe animadversions on all bodies of men, as well as on individuals, where silence does not compromise conscience. You have known me for more than a quarter of a century, and did you ever hear me speak censoriously either of an individual, or a body of men?

. . . The injunctions, to "love each other with a pure heart fervently;" to "speak evil of no man;" are not the mere garnish of religion, but were designed to enter into the substance of our creed, and become the germinating principle of our lives.

I am sure you must admit that every vicinity offers abundant scope for energies a thousand times more potent than any we can command, in discountenancing vice, and fostering all the channels of benevolence; why therefore should Christians dissipate *those* energies in detracting from each other, which should be reserved for more legitimate objects? . . .

which I soon afterwards became sensible was considerably out of place, for that I had been under the influence of an essential mistake. I was assuming (having never been apprised of the contrary) that my friend was really a Dissenter on principle, . . . and therefore I was struck with what appeared to me, a very great *inconsistency* in hearing your language respecting the established church. I was not fully made aware of my error till near the end of the dialogue, when you avowed your wish for the permanence of that establishment.

Now I mean no disrespect to that class of the community (many among them excellent Christians) who are dissenters only as a matter of habit, from the accidents of association, locality, preference for a certain mode of preaching, &c., &c. I mean no disrespect when I say that this is not at all what has been always understood by dissent, as a *matter of systematic principle*. Dissent, as argued and practised by the whole school of our most venerated teachers and examples, has been founded on the plain principle, that making religion a part of the state, is anti-christian in theory, and noxious in practice. With consenting voice they would have denied any one to be a Dissenter who did not hold this doctrine, and desire, in obvious consistency, the abolition of all secular religious establishments. Latterly, all this seems to have been forgotten,—very much from the want of instruction, and consequent want of thought, about the real nature and reason of dissent. But I am of the old school,—at the same time, not caring very much how little the people understand about the theory of the matter, *provided religion and practical dissent be making progress*.

The fundamental principle of dissent is, that the religion of Christ ought to be left to make its way among mankind in the greatest possible simplicity, by its own truth and excellence; and through the labors of sincere and pious advocates, under the presiding care of its great Author; and that it cannot, without fatal injury to that pure simplicity, that character of being a “kingdom not of this world,” be taken into the schemes and political arrangements of monarchs and statesmen, and implicated inseparably with all the secular interests, intrigues and passions. It is self-evident it must thus become a sharer in state corruptions, an engine of state acted on, and in its turn acting with, every bad influence belonging so almost universally to courts, governments, and ambitious parties of worldly men. It might beforehand be pronounced infallibly, that this

Pray excuse any stray expression which may appear defective in respect, and believe me to remain,

My dear Sir, most truly yours,

P.S. . . . The largest and best part of nonconformists desire, I doubt not, to live on friendly terms with Episcopalians, and willingly concede to them, what they so zealously require for themselves—the exercise of private judgment, being quite satisfied, if they behold in them a resemblance to their divine Lord, which can alone comport with universal holiness. This forms the *true* bond of union.

unhallowed combination must result in the debasement of religion, and in mischief to the best interests of mankind. But from this presumption *à priori*, turn to the matter of fact, as exhibited through the long course of the Christian era. I have latterly been looking a little into ecclesiastical history, at different periods; and should, from what I have seen there, have acquired, had it been possible, an augmented intensity of detestation of hierarchies and secular establishments of religion. There is the whole vast and direful plague of the *popish hierarchy*. But placing that out of view, look at *our own Protestant establishment*. What was its spirit and influence during the long period of the sufferings of the Puritans? What was its spirit even in the time of Queen Anne? Then follow it down through a subsequent century. *What did it do for the people of England?* There was one wide settled Egyptian darkness; the blind leading the blind, all but *universally*; an utter estrangement from genuine Christianity; 10,000 Christian ministers misleading the people in respect to religious notions, and a vast proportion of them setting them a bad practical example. When at length something of the true light began to dawn,—when Whitfield and Wesley came forth,—who were their most virulent opposers, even instigating and abetting the miserable people to riot, fury, and violence against them? *The established clergy*. At a later time, who were the most constant systematic opposers of an improved education of the common people? *The established clergy*. Who frustrated so lately, Brougham's national plan for this object? *The clergy*; who insisted that *they* should have a monopoly of the power in its management. Who formed the main mass of the opposition to the Bible Society for so many years? *Did one single dissenter so act?* No; *the clergy*. Who, lately, did all they could, by open opposition or low intrigue, to frustrate the valuable project for education in our own city? *The clergy*. Who were the most *generally* hostile to the Catholic emancipation, undeterred by the prospect of prolonged tumult, and ultimate civil war, ravage, and desolation in Ireland? *The clergy*. What is, at this very hour, the most fatal and withering blight on the interests and hopes of the Protestant religion in that country? *The established church*.\*

In our own less unfortunate country there are, it is computed, not much less than 15,000 clergymen of the establishment. Now what

\* "It is in vain to deny, that the church of England clergy have politically been a party in the country, from Elizabeth's time downwards, and a party opposed to the cause which, in the main, has been the cause of improvement. There have been at all times noble individual exceptions; in the reign of George the Second, and in the early part of George the Third's reign for instance, the spirit of the body has been temperate and conciliatory; but in Charles the First and Second's reign, and in the period following the revolution, they deserved so ill of their country, that the dissenters have at no time deserved worse; and therefore it will not do for the church party to identify themselves with the nation, which they are not, nor with the constitution, which they did their best to hinder from ever coming into existence."—DR. ARNOLD, *Life and Correspondence*, vol. i., p. 418, 3d edit.

proportion of this number do you think probable are men of sincere, serious piety? That it is vastly a *minority* would be acknowledged by such a man as Wilberforce. But from what one has heard and seen in very many places in England, I think *one in four* would be an *ultra* charitable conjecture; indeed a quite improbable conjecture. What is the *staple* doctrine received by the people from three-fourths (probably more) of their spiritual guides (of the church)? It is that *good works*, and a very limited sort and proportion of them, will secure their future happiness. How many thousands of those teachers are denouncing as fanaticism and delusion, the very principles which you and I account of the *very essence* of the religion of Christ! Two of the latest informants I have met with respecting the state of the church, in two widely asunder places, describe, that in one of those places the clergy are almost constantly declaiming from the pulpit against *methodism*; that in the other, the clergy (including several justices of the peace) are remonstrating against a too precise regard to the sabbath, one of them (at a place which I know) encouraging the boys and young fellows to play at various games just in front of his house, on the Sunday. And yet this clergyman-justice is a respectable, moral man. This slight series of notices afford but a faint and meagre hint of the large and awful indictment against the established church. And that indictment is, by the whole school of the able advocates of *dissent on principle*, charged in this form; namely, that such are the *natural effects* of a *secular church establishment*,—*not accidental evils of an institution fundamentally good*. And this should, I think, be as evident as any possible instance of cause and effect. Consider, what is the *patronage* of the church? For one large portion, it is in the hands of the *state*, of the ministry—men most commonly ignorant and careless of religion, and only consulting secular and political interests. It is in the private hands of great lords and great squires of colleges and corporations. No small proportion of it is a matter of direct traffic in the market, like farms or any other commodity. So many thousand pounds for a “*cure of souls!*” Consider, again, that young men (a vast majority of those who enter the church) enter as on a profession or trade, and a thing which places them on a genteel footing in society. The church is the grand receptacle, too, for secondary branches of the upper sort of families. Many latterly are from the army and navy. Consider, that personal piety is not, nor by the nature of the institution can be, any indispensable prerequisite. Who or what is there to require any such thing, or to judge of any such thing? The candidate passes through a few formalities, and it is done. And if the parishioners receive a man who is most evidently destitute of any such qualification—receive him as their instructor, consoler, and example—they have no remedy. They must be content; they cannot remove him; and the church, and *even the evangelical clergy*, censure them if they presume to go to hear instead a pious and sensible preacher in a meeting-house in their neighborhood. We affirm, then, that this

fearful mass and variety of evils consistently, and for the main part necessarily, result from the very nature of an established church; and are not accidental and separable; and that therefore the thing is radically and fundamentally bad, and pernicious to religion. If one hears talk of *correcting* it, making it a good thing by "*reform*"—one instantly says, *How* correct it? Can you make kings, ministers of state, lord chancellors, to become pious and evangelical men? Can you *convert* the whole set of patrons—lords, baronets, squires, corporations? Can you work such a miracle in Oxford and Cambridge, that they shall fit out no young gents for the church, but such as give proofs of personal piety; or make the bishops such overseers that they shall allow none to go into the fold but such as bear the evident qualifications for the shepherds of the flock? Can you secure that, when advowsons are advertised for sale, none but religious men shall buy or bid for them? Even if all this were not essentially and flagrantly impossible,—if it *might* be brought about *some time*,—I would say, How long, meanwhile, are the people, myriads and millions of them, to be left to be misled in the most momentous of their interests by multitudes of authorized teachers, who teach them not the gospel? How many of these multitudes and myriads can we contentedly resign to live and die under the delusion, that a little middling morality (honesty chiefly), with the aid of the Christianizing sprinkle of water, the confirmation, and the talismanic sacrament at last, will carry them to heaven? There is, besides, something strange and rather ludicrous in the notion of *correcting* what is itself appointed to be, and assumes to be, the *grand corrector*. There is a class of persons highly authorized, ordained, and officially appointed, to instruct, illuminate, and reform the community; the community, wiser than their teachers, are to pity them, instruct them, get them reformed, and *then go to them* for "instruction and correction in righteousness!" A curious round-about process, even if it were practicable.

Now, my dear sir, all this being so (and how feeble a representation of the state of the case!), it is, I confess, with amazement that I hear you say, while still professing yourself a dissenter—that you desire the permanence of our church establishment, so that if its standing or falling depended on your will, you would fix it to stand. What! pronounce for the permanence of an institution, which is at this very day, by an *immense majority* of its ministers, teaching the people (the little that it *does* teach) such doctrine as, if you were to hear it at Broadmead, you would earnestly protest against, as contrary to the New Testament, and fatally pernicious to the souls of the hearers if they believed it! What! pronounce for the continuance of a most awful mischief to the best interests, on the calculation that perhaps in some future age (when? when? when?) there may be a reversal of those causes which render the institution what it is; when statesmen shall be pious Christians, and colleges, wealthy patrons, and bishops, shall acquire the spirit of Christ and his apostles!

But it will be alleged, there is a very material reformation already ; here are many evangelical, and in all respects, excellent ministers in the church. This is true ; at the same time, a place like Bristol is no fair specimen of the whole state of the church, through the nation ; in many *rand* portions of which such clergymen are scattered few and rare.

here *are some* religious patrons, and latterly a few truly religious *sclesiastics* have attained the bench ;—as the brothers —, in consequence of one of them having been highly approved as tutor in the family of —, and —, from the accident of having a brother in the ministry ; which brother —, as I heard Hughes tell, had a violent contest with his colleagues for the point, and threatened to desert them if they did not yield it.

But now, these genuine Christian ministers in the church ;—I dare, in the first place, put the case respecting them in a much stronger shape than I shall, or need, abide by. In speaking of other kinds of institutions, if it were shown that though there is a considerable measure of good in it, yet there is, and in all reasonable probability is likely to be for an indefinite time to come, *more harm than good*, we should not hesitate to say it had better be abolished, even at the cost of losing that good. Now, this is the case of the church. While a considerable number are teaching the doctrines, and in the true spirit of the doctrines, which you yourself regard as the very vitality of the Christian religion, an immensely greater number are teaching in a way that *disavows those doctrines*—teaching a doctrine which in very many cases *expressly* contradicts and explodes them, and in others, does virtually and in effect the same thing ; satisfying the minds of the believing hearers with what is much more accordant to the corrupt mind, and betrays to a fatal consequence. It is a melancholy thing to be striking a balance upon ; but have we not here a plain case of more evil than good ? The inference is obvious, according to any rules we think it rational to judge by in other cases. As to any pleading that though the *ministers* do *not* teach the evangelical truth the *prayers* do, I am sure the allegation is utterly futile. From a vast number of observations, and the statements of numerous deponents who have had much larger experience, I am certain the form of prayer is utterly unavailing to impart, even in the faintest degree, the evangelical sentiments, the mere notions, I mean, when the ministry is of a contrary tenor. Even *H. More* once owned this to Lowell, and professed to wonder at it. But there is no need to put the case thus. I revert to what I said in the debate with you ; that is, “ *Would the downfall of the establishment be the loss, the silencing, of the truly religious ministers ?* ” What ! would they not take the trouble to preach to the people, if the church, as a mere national and government institution, were abolished ? Is that all they care about religion and the people’s welfare after all ? If it be, they are enjoying vastly more credit than they deserve. As to their support, not a few of them are men of property ; and for the rest, the much greater number of course—how are the *dissenting* ministers supported ?



The church property, besides, being in the supposed case applied to the national service, would greatly alleviate, on the general scale, the difficulties of support. If it were alleged that, in their capacity of *ministers* of the *national establishment* they have a certain character of *authority* in the people's apprehension, which contributes to add weight to their ministrations, beyond what they would have as mere *Christian ministers*, I should answer, that this is a true but unlucky argument; for that this circumstance *equally* gives weight and authority with the people to those who are *not* teaching genuine Christianity—who are the far greater number.

Well then, supposing the church as a secular establishment to be suddenly prostrate in ruins, what is the consequence? First, we have all the truly evangelical, pious, and zealous ministers *still preaching*, and many of them much more widely and frequently than at present they *can or dare do*; and next, we have the instant relinquishment and silence of the many thousands of clergymen who care nothing about the ministry, but as a profession or trade. Now, my dear sir, do answer it to yourself, with unprejudiced simplicity, whether this would not be a most important advantage gained to the cause of religion. Answer this in honest candor.

It is true, there would at first be a strange confusion, in consequence of the vacating of so many ill-occupied pulpits. But this would fast abate. If the people really cared about attendance at church, they would be sure to have the Scriptures and prayers read (the only good thing they had before), and any respectable reader could do this. For another thing, the truly valuable ~~ex~~-ministers could and would very greatly extend, and multiply, and diversify their labors. A number of the *most respectable* of the *non-evangelical* clergymen would be disposed to continue their services till gradually replaced by something better. And there would be a great and rapid increase of the number of that secondary and uncanonical kind of preachers, who are already doing such ample good over the country.

You plead hard for liberal and brotherly *union* with the good men in the church. Is it possible you are unaware that nine in ten, perhaps a much greater proportion, of the evangelical clergymen would do anything sooner than second your motion? Is it not a matter of the most common observation and notoriety, that they, in general, affect an *ultra* high-churchism (from a most cowardly motive) and recoil from any friendly contact with dissenters? The Bible Society is almost the only thing in which they have been willing to come into anything like temporary amicable communication; and that has very generally been done in a manner to imply *condescension*; and for doing so, they have received from dissenters a sad quantity of fulsome and sycophantic adulation. . . .

It is a valuable circumstance of alteration that there is so considerable a number of serious ministers latterly in the church. My idea is, that the divine Being is determined that a corrupt institution shall be

compelled, spite of itself, to do some good before its fall. That it is in no slow progress towards its fall, I take to be a matter of obvious calculation. If the progress of (*practical*) dissent shall continue in the same *ratio* as during the last twenty years, the church will, in no very long course of years, be left in such a minority of numbers, and therefore weight and importance, in the community, that the *state* will begin to think how far it may be worth supporting. That it is coming in peril is sounded from *both* sides of the hierarchy. The zealous evangelical clergyman, *Acaster*, in the recent publication which has made considerable noise, in earnestly urging a grand reform, has asserted that unless the church shall be *very greatly* changed from its present inefficiency and corruption, it will in twenty years more be annihilated. And who is to reform it? Such men as the Duke of Wellington and the archbishops? That it is mended in the degree we have lived to see, is virtually owing to the dissenters. That it has been compelled to abate its persecuting spirit and policy is owing to the vastly improved intelligence of the age,—an effect, which from the same cause, has taken place in some parts of the *popish* world—as in France.

But, my dear sir, I shall long since have utterly tired you. I am sorry to have so occupied your time and my own. But you have put me on my defence. . . .

The dissenters' system (as far as they can have anything that can be so named) is simply to teach and preach religion to such as choose to be taught, forming voluntary societies, and in all ways and senses supporting themselves, in point of expenses and everything else. . . . It is the very manner in which Christianity was originally propagated in the world. How else should or can it be propagated? It is an *immensely* different thing to have a secular establishment, shaped, richly endowed, and supported by the state—a profane and profligate king acknowledged as head of this church, a power in the government (often a most irreligious set of men) to decree the doctrines and observances of religion—a set of wealthy and lordly archbishops and bishops—the institution—constantly made an engine of state—furnished with a clergy to whom personal religion is no prerequisite, and many of them signing articles which they do not believe—constituted in a way to produce ambition, sycophancy to power, and arrogance towards the people—to say not a word of the vast and horrid history of persecution, the *principle* of which is *inherent* in such an invention, and which has made the hierarchy about the blackest spectacle in the retrospect of the Christian era. How easily we can set out of view this *inherent tendency* of an established hierarchy, when we live in times and in a country where knowledge, and the theory and spirit of freedom (together with the absolute *necessity* imposed on the church of being moderate toward so very large a division of the community), have wearied this persecuting spirit into abeyance and comparative quietness!

Allow me to observe, that, in the *company of church-people*, I avoid, in mere civility, such expressions as you have criticized: in your friendly

society, there can rarely occur any particular occasion for using them. But in the little companies of *absolute* dissenters that one now and then falls into, one should feel it very strange to be under a law inhibiting the very strongest expressions to be applied to an institution from which—*what do we dissent for*, but *because* we judge it anti-christian, unscriptural and corrupt?

I remain, my dear sir, yours,

With the most cordial and friendly regard,

J. FOSTER.

P. S. It is a remarkable sentence which has been recently quoted in more than one publication, from that determined supporter of church bigotry and state despotism, Lord Clarendon, "That of all classes of men he had ever had to do with, the *clergy* were the most narrow-minded in their mode of judging of affairs."

We can testify, that up to this hour they are, as a body (unless perhaps the *lawyers* may be their rivals in this quality), of all classes of men the most obstinately averse to every sort of public improvement, when anything that they can call *innovation* is the condition of it. It is probable that all the argument and eloquence in the nation would not avail to persuade the predominant portion of our clergy to consent to an omission or alteration, of here and there a palpably exceptionable expression in the liturgy; as for instance, that which affirms over the graves of the most wicked men the certainty of a *happy resurrection*; or that by which the Almighty is informed (what he could not otherwise know) that George the IV. is a "*most religious king*;" not to mention that which precisely and unequivocally declares that an infant, under the act of throwing a few drops of water in its face, is *made a Christian*. As to this last, what wretched and dishonest quibbling there has been (by Biddulph, and many others of the evangelical clergy) to form some other meaning to expressions of which the sense is as clear as daylight!"\*

\* "I . . . would appeal to any man of common understanding, from the most unlettered peasant to the ablest in the land; or to any jury of twelve honest men, be they Dissenters or be they Romanists; or the first twelve one might meet in the streets of London, and submit to their judgment, whether it is possible for a doctrine to be couched in plainer or more positive words; whether there can be the shadow of a doubt that the Church of England holds the doctrine of baptismal regeneration; whether the denial of baptismal regeneration be not as clearly contrary to the doctrines of the Church of England as the maintenance of transubstantiation, or the Pope's supremacy; and whether it is not one of the most astounding facts in religious controversy, that ministers of the Church of England should, Sunday after Sunday, use this service, should baptize infants brought to them, and then call on the congregation to join with them in thanking God, for that it hath pleased him to regenerate each child, and yet hold the opinion, either that the child has not been regenerated at all, or that his regeneration is hypothetical!! If the maintenance of baptismal regeneration be orthodox, the dernier must be heretical, or at least the setter forth of erroneous and strange doctrines. The question is come to a direct issue; the church can-

## CLXI. TO DR. STENSON.

[Extracts from various Letters.]

LET us gratefully hail the gleams that come to us from a better world, through the gloom of declining age, which is beginning to darken before us, and give all diligence to the preparation for passing the shades of death, confident in the all-sufficiency of Him who died for us, to emerge into the bright economy and the happy society beyond.

---

Indeed I would regard as something better than enemies, the visitations that give a strong warning of the final and not remote beating down and demolition of the whole frail tabernacle. A salutary impression made on the soul, even through a wound of the body, is a good greatly more than compensating the evil. In the last great account no doubt a vast number of happy spirits will have to ascribe that happiness to the evils inflicted on their bodies, as the immediate instrumental cause.

---

Let us take the admonition, to do what little we can for our great Master before the night shall come. That it is so little, is one of the things in which we are required to be submissive to his sovereign will. It is part of the doom of our fallen nature—respecting that miserable debility and corruption of which you can find no man to sympathize with your opinions and feelings more emphatically than I do, and the more so the longer I look at it, and especially have my own personal experience of it.

---

How unwelcome are these shortening days! The precursory intimations of winter even before the summer itself is gone, and how almost frightfully rapid the vicissitudes of the seasons, telling us of time, the consumption of life, the approximation to its end. That end; that end! And there is an hour decreed for the final one. It *will* be here—it will be past. And then—that other life! that other world! Let us pray more earnestly than ever, that the *first hour after the last* may open upon us in celestial light.

---

How strange and mortifying that progress in personal religion is so difficult! that it should not be the natural, earnest, and even impetuous *tendency* of an immortal spirit, summoned to the prosecution of immortal interests!

---

It often occurs to meditative thought, what an instant *cure* it will be for all the disorders at once, when the frame itself is laid down, and the immortal inhabitant, abandoning it, will care no more about it; will seem

not contain both doctrines, the advocates of one or other must give way.”—*The real Danger of the Church of England.* By the Rev. W. GRESLEY, M.A., *Prebendary of Lichfield*, London, 1846, pp. 19, 27

to say, "Take all thy diseases with thee now into the dust; they and thou concern me no more."

How very *conditionally* it is that firm, uninterrupted health is really a blessing. And what a testimony it is against our miserably perverted nature, that a real and eminently great good is so much in danger of proving an evil.

It continually surprises me to think, how little that is remarkable occurs (so as to be known) where a hundred thousand human beings, all busily intent on their purposes, are existing within the circuit of a very few miles. *How monotonous is the human condition!* In fancy, we might have supposed that among such a multitude of living, thinking, acting creatures there should be a continual succession of something to excite surprise, instead of *an endless common-place of existence*. But we see business just going on the usual way; *sin* of all sorts, constant to its customs; religion but little changing its aspects and operations.

As to religion in this country, and the world at large, how passionately one could long to see some great movement, some striking and prodigious changes, some events answering to the figure of "a nation born in a day." It is disconsolate to see, in this respect, the year end nearly as it began; a progress almost imperceptibly slow; such a dead weight on millions of souls; such a vast measure of *means* consumed in producing so little effect toward the one great end. One envies the people of those future times when a new order of powers and progress will be unfolded on the earth.

---

. . . . Have you any notion that the world is just on the point of prodigiously mending, or that there is any glimmer of the millennium on the horizon? There is truly little enough of anything of the kind to be *seen*; but old as I am, and misanthropic, and sceptically given, and all that, I am really willing to *hope* that some considerable good may not be far off, though it is likely to come by a very rugged and costly process.

---

CLXII. TO THE REV. JOHN FAWCETT.

*Stapleton, near Bristol, April 24, 1830.*

MY DEAR OLD FRIEND,—I was hesitating whether to look at the date of your letter; I usually avoid, if I can, in self-defence, seeing *that* part of a letter which I am beginning to answer, because it is almost sure to meet me in the character of reproach. I have not, however, been lucky enough to escape catching sight of the date of yours, and it is just four months since. It gratified me much, both as a proof that friendships of youth may continue alive to far advanced age; and as conveying many interesting particulars of information from the scene of my early life and interests. But how few, how very few, of the *persons* of my acquaintance

in that scene could be found in it if I revisited it now ; I should have to read the names on tombstones of most of those with whom I familiarly conversed forty years since. My memory is bad to the most wretched degree ; and no small sign of its being so is, that I have a much less power of recollecting circumstances of early life than I have observed to be quite usual in persons of my age. As to things comparatively recent, I experience even more than the usual treacherousness of the memory of a person in age, particularly in respect to names. In meeting persons with whom I have been, or even am at present, familiarly acquainted, I am frequently at a loss for the name ; so that, unwittingly asking a husband,—“ How is Mrs.——,” or a wife,—“ How is Mr.——,” I am baffled, stop short, and am driven at last to say—“ your wife,”—or “ the good man,” or “ good lady at home.” This has happened to me many a time, with persons whom I knew as well as my own door or my old hat.

The worst of it is, that it makes reading very nearly useless to me ; I retain but a very dim trace of anything I read, even striking matters of fact ; and as to matters of thought, some time lately I read on perhaps 100 pages of some book or other (I forget what), without becoming aware, till I came to some remarkable name, or some such thing, that I had read *all those pages but a few weeks before*. . . . Have you had any taste or fancy for *graphical* works, such as splendidly illustrated and picturesque books of travels, antiquity, and the like ? This has been my taste quite to a fault ; a fault I mean in reference to pecuniary means. . . . Pray, do you often preach ? I have suffered an almost entire deposition from that office, by physical organic debility as the primary cause, and, as an accessional one by choice, from having felt the great inconvenience and laboriousness of doing occasionally, what I have been so long out of the practice of ; so that, for a long time past, I have declined wholly our city pulpits, and never go higher than an easy, unstudied discourse now and then, in one or two of the neighboring country villages, where there is no stated ministry. Mr. Hall is in high physical vigor (for the age of 66), while often suffering severely the inexplicable pain in his back, of which he has been the subject from his childhood. His *imagination* (and therefore the *splendor* of his eloquence) has considerably abated, as compared with his earlier and his meridian pitch, but his *intellect* is in the highest vigor ; and the character of his preaching is that of the most emphatically evangelical piety. His friends have now surrendered all hope of his doing anything more in the way of authorship ; they have ceased to remonstrate with him on the subject, but most deeply deplore this lack of service to the Christian cause, when they consider that he might have produced half a dozen, or half a score (the more the better) of volumes of sermons, which would have filled a lamentable chasm in that province of our literature, and would have been decidedly, considered in their *combination* of high qualities, the foremost set of sermons in our language.

Do you take any more interest in political matters now in later, than

you were inclined to do in earlier, life? Very great things have been done in recent times. America set free—Greece—a humiliation of the Mahomedan empire—the Catholic emancipation—and a great part of the world put in a state of mobility; ominous, all may hope, of prodigious and accelerated changes.

How is my old friend Mrs. Fawcett? On meeting her I should look, with eager inspection, to recognize a countenance than which no one is more indelibly impressed on my memory. Give my most friendly regards to her, with congratulations that she has fought so gallantly through the toils of life.

---

CLXIII. TO B. STOKES, ESQ.

*Stapleton, June 16, 1830.*

MY DEAR SIR, . . . One of the constellation which is shedding such lustre on our dark world (Dr. Okely\*) has withdrawn, or is with-

\* The Rev William Okely, M.D., was the third son of the Rev. Francis Okely (formerly of St. John's College, Cambridge), a Moravian minister at Northampton. He was born at Bedford, Jan. 25, 1762, and educated first at Fulnec, and subsequently at Niesky and Barby. On completing his studies, he spent a short time at Christianfield in Denmark, and then returned to Fulnec in the capacity of teacher, but soon resigned, in consequence of holding sentiments which were incompatible with that office. After spending two years with a surgeon at Bedford, he removed to Edinburgh, where he prosecuted the study of medicine and took the degree of M.D. During his stay there, he was highly respected and distinguished for propriety of conduct and character, which he always attributed to his early education among the United Brethren. In 1797 he was chosen Physician of the General Infirmary at Northampton, and while there, published a sceptical work entitled "Pyrology." Shortly after he became a firm believer in Christian truth, and immediately published a recantation of his "Pyrology."

"The author," he says, "was himself an unconverted man, to whom, of course, all that relates to the transcendental part of creation could not but appear confused and unintelligible, and the conduct and language of such as were real followers of Jesus, weak and enthusiastic. By the merciful preservation of God, however, he had continued an *honest* man, not pretending to know what he did not know; bold enough to assert what he did know, and vain enough to imagine that what he knew was all that could be known. Suppose such a man tolerably tinctured with the letter of Christianity, but neither understanding it, nor seeing any beauty in it, except the moral precepts and human character of its Author; at the same time educated in retirement, and ignorant of the world; suppose such a one placed in a sphere calculated for extensive observation of mankind, and resolved to judge of the belief of men from their conduct, and not from their public professions;—the picture such a person would draw of man, would, I believe, be nearly that contained in the *Pyrology*. It is the picture of a natural man, the slave of Satan, dead in trespasses and sins, without God and Christ in the world, and hastening to endless perdition; it is the picture of a rational brute; it was his own picture. . . . The immediate sources whence most of the author's mistakes are derived, are first, a presumptuous reliance on the strength of his faculties, and extent of his information; secondly, a want of attention to the *detail* of the gospel history. The worst consequence of my former doctrine is, that it cuts off the doctrine of the atonement—that main pillar of Christianity."

On renouncing his sceptical views, Dr. O. solicited re-admission to the Brethren's church, and in that communion occupied various stations as minister or director of schools. He was distinguished for logical acuteness, and the fearless investigation of truth. His pulpit discourses were marked

drawing, his share of the lustre. I saw him lately in Bristol, whither he is come in a state of extreme physical debility, from which his friends do not anticipate his possible recovery. He is a Moravian of much knowledge and mental sharpness; at the same time a very worthy man. Dr. Chalmers is to preach this evening for the Auxiliary of the British and Foreign School Society, as he did the day before yesterday, at the opening of a capital new meeting-house, built wholly at the expense of Mr. Hare the great floor-cloth manufacturer, and our most munificent promoter of religious especially, but of all good designs; which he does, apparently, at the expense of far less self-denial than it appears to cost many of our rich professors of religion (especially such as have made their fortunes from nothing by industry) to contribute in a vastly less proportion. Dr. C. retains without the smallest diminution, his simple, friendly, unassuming character and manners. He has with him a delightfully pleasing woman, in the character of his wife, with the addition of his eldest daughter, and two female relations who are on a trip to Scotland for health.

. . . . There is very little to be said about anything here. As to matter of health, there is no great variation, except that a cough which I have entirely now got rid of after two years' duration, has been replaced by some other affection, which is probably of a still more fixed character; that is to say, a disordered circulation, a frequently intermitting pulsation, from some unknown and probably organic cause. It is a disorder which suffers great temporary augmentation from very slight occasions, a little sudden, or laboriously hard, corporal exertion, such as walking up a hill, or hastily or eagerly going about anything, or from any uneasy kind of mental exertion. A long, stout evening's talk is a great mischief: as to anything like preaching, I believe, I am never to attempt it again, in any place, little or great. Each medical friend enjoins careful avoidance of all such things, as certain to aggravate the internal cause, while not pronouncing the affection to be exactly of a formidable and ominous character, provided I be systematically careful. I have been cupped and afterwards bled, but without any sensible effect. I am never more to climb a Welsh hill, not to say *mountain*. As the people say, I *look* passably well. I guess some of them suspect a little affectation—but they are quite mistaken if they do: I am not, at the same time, suffering any pain. I a little envy you the sight of so much Cambrian scenery as you will pass over, and in sight of, two or three weeks hence; but if I were in the midst of it, I should have the mortification of feeling myself

by originality, and rendered highly interesting by bringing the results of his study of human nature to bear on the characters and facts recorded in the scriptures. Besides the *Pyrology*, his only avowed publications were: 1. A letter to Robert Southey, Esq., &c., on his *Life of the late Mr. John Wesley*, and especially that part in which he treats of the Moravians. 2. A Sermon on the Incarnation of the Son of God, 1824. He also contributed a valuable article to the *Eclectic Review* (Jan. and Feb., 1816), on *Gibbon's Miscellaneous Works*. He died July 9, 1830.



disqualified in quite as great, perhaps considerably greater degree, than by my lameness during that expedition so many years since. There are latterly many things, in addition to mere chronology, to remind me that life is approaching or entering its last stage, and that the grand concern is to prepare for its final hour. Such considerations will sometimes visit the mind of my dear and estimable friend also, though probably not experiencing many *direct* admonitions (in any way of infirmity) of the advance toward old age. . . .

---

CLXIV. TO J. PURSER, ESQ.

*Stapleton, November, 1830.*

MY DEAR SIR,—For many weeks I have been intending to write to you; and a few days since, took out from a quire this identical sheet for the purpose. The newspaper received from you yesterday admonishes me not longer to defer. A prompt acknowledgment was due for your kind invitation to revisit Ireland. That is a pleasure which I have been long promising myself; and the new kind of navigation has vastly changed the calculation of time and facility in the transit. But the decline of the year so late as into the autumn, is not quite the desirable season. Short nights are the thing for the sea, and long days, late evenings especially, are the thing for a little adventure, in which one would wish to combine with the friendly household gratifications some slight trips to see again several of the beautiful spots and scenes of your “green island.” At the same time, there would be no little pensiveness, perhaps more than the pleasure; indeed I am sure there would, in revisiting some of the places (suppose the Dayle) which I have seen in company with our excellent departed friend, the associate no more in any adventures or pleasures under the sun. Besides our various walks in the park to Howth, and other places in the vicinity of the city, I had in company with him and Strahan (also gone) an exceedingly interesting excursion into the noble scenery of the county of Wicklow. I have no doubt I should greatly admire these scenes, if I were there again; but the effect of far towards forty years since added to my life, and the continually presented thought, “*he is here no more—nor on earth,*” would throw a shade over the beauty and the magnificence.

You may well believe I was greatly interested by your account of his declining health and final removal, and by your sentiments and reflexions on the affecting event. You will indeed feel it a loss irreparable. But how pleasing and consolatory it is to contemplate a good man’s end;—“the end of that man is peace.” And consider, in how inferior and limited a sense it is his end; it being the end only of the brief introductory period through which he had to advance and be disciplined for an incomparably nobler, and an endless life, on which he has now entered, and from which he triumphantly looks *back* on death, as a dark passage through which he will pass no more. *We, my friend, have yet to pass*

it: may we do so, when the time shall come, with the same pious, Christian peace and confidence, and may we rejoin him in the happy society of a better world! But you, I hope, are appointed to a long protracted series of duties and usefulness in this lower sphere.

. . . . I warmly congratulate you on the character and abilities of the elder individuals of your children. One of them, I perceive by the newspaper, has acquitted himself worthily at college. What are your prospects or his wishes as to his future pursuits and vocation in life? Such duties and attainments are probably pointing to some professional department. I wish you *could* get a very large infusion of disciplined talent, sound reason, and virtuous principle among your islanders. You are certainly in a disastrous, and I am afraid, perilous condition—such fearful excitability, amidst so much ignorance, superstition, poverty, and oppression. You have sent us hither a famous present in your squire O'Connell, a man who has accomplished one immense good for Ireland, but whose wild-fire, if not absolutely *unprincipled*, character and purposes are now doing sad mischief. He is doing his best to throw discredit on all sorts of reforms, so urgently wanted, by the lawless manner in which he is ostensibly co-operating to promote them. Nay, *not co-operating*,—for their more rational promoters are harassed and obstructed by his assistance. How unfortunate that such a man should (instead of a *Grattan*\*) stand forward by far the most prominent representative of Ireland, to be, in the apprehension of a large portion of the people here, a true sample and interpreter of the collective Irish character. I have little hope of any material good for either nation, from the present parliament, or from the new monarch, about whom there is so mad a rant in fashion. What is such a man likely to know or care about the good of the nation, whose only notion of kingship, as far as yet appears, is that of enjoying himself at his ease (and putting other people at their ease with him) in a jolly, dashing, gadding sort of hilarity? Think of such a character, and then of the stupid baseness that, even in parliament, is calling him "the best king that ever ascended the British throne!" It would be quite enough to say that it is to be hoped *he is better than the last*, and there could not well be a *cheaper praise*.

I am sure you cannot fail to contemplate with great and serious interest, the portentous aspect of the affairs of the nations. There is coming into action, on a vast scale, a principle of change and commotion, of hostility, hatred, and defiance to the old established "order of things," which absolutely can never be quieted nor quelled—which must be progressive with augmenting knowledge ("knowledge is power"), but which in pervading and actuating a mass so dreadfully corrupt as man-

\* "His eloquence, must, in its earliest stage of public display, have evinced itself as the flame and impetus of mighty genius. The man would infallibly be recognized as of the race of the intellectual Incas, the children of the Sun."—*Contributions, &c., to the Eclectic*, vol. ii., p. 333. (*Grattan's Speeches*. Eclectic Review, Feb., 1813.)

kind is in *every* nation, must inevitably, while a righteous Governor presides over the world, be accompanied in its progress by awful commotions and inflictions. My settled impression is, that the rising generation are destined to witness a process more tremendous than all that their predecessors have beheld. While exulting at what has taken place in France, I have yet no confidence of a peaceful result in Europe. . . .

---

CLXV. TO THE REV. JOSIAH HILL.

*Stapleton, December 31, 1830.*

MY DEAR SIR,— . . . I am as little as yourself capable of forming, and as little disposed to seek or wish, *new* friendships ; nor, yourself excepted (a term approaching to twenty years is enough to confer the denomination *old*, as applied to social relations), do I retain more than some relic of old friendships ; I have never been propense to *contract* them. Two or three valuable companions of my early life still survive ; objects of my high esteem, but at remote distances, rarely corresponded with, one of them not seen more than once in a space of between thirty and forty years, all of them formed to habits and feelings greatly differing in many respects from my own. Here I am on amicable terms with a few excellent individuals, of different degrees of intellectual endowment. With the *grand chief* in that quality, indeed, my acquaintance has not become intimate. From the first I made a point of duty not to intrude on his time in the morning part of the day, which I considered it as *his* imperative duty (for the public's sake, religion's sake, posterity's sake to *employ alone*) ; and in the evenings, with a comparatively rare exception, he is, all the week and all the year round, *out* in company somewhere or other, where I have been compelled to decline many invitations to be of the parties, from experience of the great mischief of turning out of rooms, often heated to excess, into the night air. Next to him in mental power is *Anderson*, whom, I remember, you met once or twice. He is a *very* powerful man, of great and solid worth. Just now and then I have fallen in the way of Dr. Prichard, for whose qualities I have a high esteem, while I am amazed at his attainments, and his prodigious *faculty* of attaining. I get into what is called company in a very moderate degree, but quite as much as I wish ; and it is one recommendation of this dark abode, at several miles distance from the town, that it serves to limit my liability in that respect. A hard evening's talk with that abler sort of men, especially if repeated several times at short intervals, does me sensible mischief, as affecting that obscure internal disorder which I have experienced during the last year or two. I am just now the worse in that respect, for several such evenings, which have come too thick at this particular season of convivial meeting ; the "generous fare," as we call it, contributing, I have no doubt, to the evil. The morbid symptom is, or was, previously to the last few weeks, something less prevailing, I think, than at the time I first mentioned it to you. . . .

## CLXVI. TO THE REV. JOHN FAWCETT.

*Stapleton, March 9, 1831.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,— . . . I was much interested by your information respecting the branches, and movements, and location, of your family. In frequently walking, a vastly remote time since, by the Lifefey, but not so far as Celbridge, I could little dream, that one day a part of the Brearley Hall, Foot, and Ewood family was to take an abode by that stream. How much more likely it then was that *I* should do so, who, however, was *not* to do so. There are few things more remarkable than the total *uncalculableness*, if I may make such a word, of the ultimate local destinations of a young family, or a knot of youthful friends.

I know not whether to be sorry (I can be so only in reference to yourself and Mrs. Fawcett personally) that one of your family, by this time a second, and, as you intimate, probably ere long a third, may be found occupied with their various duties in the neighborhood of Dublin, instead of that of Hebden-bridge. There sadly wants, in the former scene, as many good and useful people as you can spare. . . . I am rather pleased with the project of the third member, for going to preach where there is so notorious a want of religious instruction of the genuine kind.

The name Celbridge instantly recalled Dean Swift to my mind. But I am quite mistaken (very possibly so) if it was not *Vanessa*, instead of *Stella*, that was his companion there. The story of those two women, as told by Walter Scott, in his *Life of Swift*, is very interesting and very mournful; that of *Vanessa* (Miss Vanhomrigh) especially, so ardently affectionate, so wronged, so cruelly consigned to a premature fate.

I congratulate you on such a pleasing novelty as an excursion to Ireland, unfortunate only in its being made in winter. It would be curious, if practicable, to ascertain the difference of effect on the mind, between such an adventure, made at your time of life, and in youth as it happened to me. Latterly, I have been almost intending to make on myself the experiment of this comparison, having been strongly invited to visit Dublin, by almost the only one of my early friends there whom time has left alive, and whom I have never seen since he was a youth, or rather a boy. His excellent father, in whose house I lived, is very lately dead. *Him*, after more than an interval of thirty years, I did see here the year before last.

Do you feel, in your own person, strong intimations of advancing age? My brother tells me of *snow* on your head. *I* have lost nearly all my teeth, nearly the hearing on *one* side, much of my original strength of sight, and all the tenacity of a memory never more than very moderately good. Within the last year, too, I have become subject to great irregularity and disorder of circulation or pulsation, uncertain from what internal cause, too probably from something organically disordered in the vital central part. It is greatly affected, additionally disordered for the time, by any considerable effort of excited continued speaking; inasmuch

that any such thing as preaching, which, for years past, I have declined in all but very rare instances, must now be declined wholly. Amidst these monitory defalcations, I am still favored with a *considerable* measure of what may *comparatively* be called strength. My dear friend, we must think daily of holding ourselves in readiness for setting off on the last great journey. . . .

---

CLXVII. TO J. PURSER, ESQ.

*Stapleton, March 29, 1831.*

. . . . I must congratulate you on a great amendment (in respect to the tumultuary disposition) in your green island since the date of your last. . . . I do not wonder, that in beholding so lawless and alarming a state of your populace, you should have been driven a little too far toward the passive obedience and non-resistance principle; which enjoins the people, in a fallacious and treacherous sense, to "be quiet and mind their own business." "Leave the concerns of government to those whose business it is—the statesmen; *our* part is respect and submission;" was the precept and doctrine inculcated by the good people on me, when a young fellow, blazing with the fire kindled by the French revolution; and there has been a long and melancholy illustration of the wisdom and benefit of this succumbing and reverential loyalty, in the accumulation of every sort of corruption; in wanton wars, to gratify the pride of courts; in debts and taxes, which have almost crushed the people to the earth; in the consolidation of a system of iniquity, which, just at this very juncture, when it could be endured no longer, is demanding the whole energy of the national mind and will to be exerted for its abolition; and which is still maintaining a desperate and formidable conflict for the defeat of that whole energy. "Why," one exclaims, as one abomination after another is exposed, "Why did our forefathers, in their besotted loyalty to power, *let* the thing come to this? Curse on their loyalty, though they were silly enough to identify it with piety!"

Too true it is, that some of the nations that have risen in their wrath to crush their oppressors, are showing themselves ill fit for freedom. But what then? they never would have become so under an oppressive despotism; the alternative therefore was, either to continue, age after age, in their old debasing slavery, or to throw it off, and get on as they might, through a protracted process of experiment, confusion, and commotion, toward an ultimate state of well-ordered freedom, which, after all, will never be attained till there be more religion, more reverence for the supreme and eternal Sovereign. But here again, how is religion itself to be known, or even freely taught, till the barbarizing power of combined tyranny and superstition be blown up?

A portentous gloom is gathering and thickening over Europe, giving sad presages that there are vials of wrath ready to be poured out, in a *vindictive* dispensation of the divine justice. But let us trust, that while it is vindictive, it will, at the same time, be corrective, and work

on, and work out, into a purer and happier condition of the world at length.

The most grievous scene of our immediate contemplation is *Poland*; such magnificent heroism, such prodigious sacrifices, too probably doomed to end in failure and aggravated national calamity. How often one wishes that some 50,000 of the fiery spirits that are disturbing France, could be arrayed with the completest possible apparatus of destruction, by the side of that patriotic and self-devoted legion. You most certainly exult, with so many myriads of us, that we really are, at last, in the near prospect of getting rid of a huge mass of pestilential rottenness, declared by its defenders to be an essential part of what is called "the constitution,"—and which may be so, for ought I know or care, for neither I nor anybody else can tell what that canted and extolled humbug does really consist of; all I know is, that the term has been one of the most available of all the expedients of political delusion.

---

CLXVIII. TO DR STENSON.

1831.

YES, my dear sir, we *must* be prepared to surrender to the inevitable approaches of mortality, and the more earnestly aspire to be ready to surrender the whole of what can die. How striking to realize the idea, that at a time, at the utmost comparatively not distant, this entire material frame, with all that in it is now in order and in disorder, will be under ground and dissolving into dust. I often image to myself the fact, as it will one day be, when, at the same time, all *above* ground will continue to be as we see it now, and are sharers of it, life and activity—a profusion of blooming youth, amusement, business, infinitely various interests and pursuits, and (as now) little thought of death. *So far* the anticipated, inevitable, and prodigious change, cannot but have a dreary aspect. But there is the *never-dying principle*, the spiritual agent, the real and imperishable being; *that* will be set free, and rise in sublime independence of dust, and all that can be turned to dust; let us take care of that, or rather commit it to God to be taken care of, and then never mind the insignificant loss which we are doomed to incur, of a piece of organized clay. . . .

---

CLXIX. TO THE REV. JOSIAH HILL.

*Stapleton, July 16, 1831.*

. . . . I *am* thankful, but wish I were much more so, for such an instance as you mention, on the authority of Mrs. L——, of the valuable effect of which anything I have written may be made the instrumental mean. When informed of such circumstances, I seem to hear the solemn and warning words, "Lest I be myself a cast-away." I am strongly with

you in adverting to the "autumn" of life, and the gradual loss of coevals and friends; and their removal seems needful, in addition to the figured chronicle of time, to make one really see and feel, that the main allotment of life is gone by. The fact and feeling that it is so, often return on me when exulting in the great change so immensely advantageous, as we may surely hope, in the political world. It occurs to me how soon I shall be withdrawn, absolutely and finally, from the scene, and all its events and interests. Still it is for the nation's sake, for mankind's sake, for posterity's sake, an emphatic gratification, to see a long and proudly imperious reign of corruption and iniquity drawing to a close. It is a just, and quite *rational* emotion, that triumphs at the ignominious and irrecoverable prostration of an order of men who have, during so long a domination, been inflicting immeasurable mischief on the nation and the world. How long it has been to wait for a revolution, which, forty years since, many of us fancied to be near at hand; and what an enormity of evil perpetrated during that wide space, in the shapes of war, exhausting profligacy, and all diversities of delusion, oppression, and practised and patronized corruption! And how unexpectedly, how suddenly, has this downfall happened to the arrogant and besotted tribe! Some twenty months since, or less, what ineffable scorn they would have felt for any prophet of such an event. There will not fail to be evils in the new system, but an immense good is gained in the nation's being no longer at the disposal of a class of men, who would willingly sell it to the Devil, if they could be sure of getting payment.

## CHAPTER VIII.

ILLNESS AND DEATH OF MRS. FOSTER.—MR. ANDERSON.—JOURNEY TO WALES.—MR. HUGHES.—RAMMOHUNROY.—LETTERS ON THE CHURCH.—ON THE BALLOT.—ECLECTIC REVIEW.—MR. FAWCETT.

1832—1838.

THE ensuing six years formed the saddest period in Foster's life. It began with the fatal illness of her who had been his beloved, affectionate, and invaluable companion for nearly a quarter of a century, and whom he regarded as the cause not only of a very great portion of whatever happiness he had possessed during that long period, but of whatever mental improvement he had made. Her intellect was in an extraordinary degree strong and correct, and for a refined perception and depth of reflective feeling, her husband declared that he had never known her equal.

For several years Mrs. Foster's health had been in a very precarious state, but in the spring of 1832, the symptoms of decline assumed a more decidedly alarming aspect. "The occasion of my walks to Downend,"\* says Mr. Foster, "is a painful one. My estimable wife is there (at her sister Cox's) in a state of great prostration. Some morbid affection by which she has been suffering many years, interfering with the process of nutrition, and slowly growing worse, without being plainly evident in its nature till within the last year or two, has reduced her within the last few months to a miserably debilitated and emaciated condition, and so rapidly at last as to demand a strong medical treatment; a treatment which at the same time her feebleness can very ill sustain. She is assiduously attended by our worthy friend and neighbor, Dr. Bompas; and her brother-in-law, Dr. Stenson, of Bourton, has just now kindly come to be with her a week or two. It is confessedly a case of great doubtfulness and danger, and with no hope of anything like a *complete* remedy; but not without a hope of such alleviation as may protract for a while her

\* To the Rev. Josiah Hill, May 1, 1832.



valuable life ;—I regret to think of its precariousness even at the best. I will hope that the divine mercy may spare her to us for a while, but fear to look forward. If she do not speedily recover a little strength she must sink, I fear, inevitably. If a few weeks shall, by the indulgence of Heaven, restore her sufficiently for the journey, she will go to Dr. Stenson's at Bourton, her native place, where she will be daily under the most kind and judicious medical care. . . . I am confident of her safety as to the great final interest ; but her removal would be a most mournful dispensation to me, to her children, and to those of her friends who best know her exceeding value. . . . When my apprehensions are gloomy, I sometimes comfort myself by the consideration, that at the age of nearly sixty-two, I can have no very long time to stay behind. Oh may we all, through the merits of our Redeemer, find ourselves one day where your dear and inestimable wife and son are now enjoying their triumph over mortality, sin, and all evil."

In June, Mrs. Foster performed, though not without difficulty, the journey to Bourton. At times the disorder appeared to be checked ; yet the amendment was never so great as to warrant the expectation of recovery : still, no immediate danger was threatened. In the course of few weeks, however, the intelligence of a marked increase of debility brought her husband in haste to the scene of affliction. In a letter to Mr. Anderson (dated Bourton, July 21), he says, "I had been intending, but not immediately, nor at any exactly determined time, to come hither. The communications from S. were not such as to preclude a small delay, which several points of convenience made of some consequence to me. A letter from him received on Wednesday described my wife as having been, during several days, to the end of the preceding week, remarkably better in all appearance, but as having suffered a diminution of that apparent improvement ; and as there would be an exactly opportune conveyance from Cheltenham hither to-day (Friday), he said that he and his patient wished me to avail myself of it, which I instantly determined to do. His letter had come at noon on Wednesday, and when we were just going to bed within a few minutes of midnight, we were surprised and alarmed by Mrs. C. in her carriage, summoning us to be ready to go with her, at that hour, for Bourton ; a messenger on horseback having brought a note from S. to her, and one to me, to tell us it was very desirable we should all go

without delay,—though not meaning or expecting we should set off till early in the morning (this was not noted in the letter). We reached here by eight o'clock, and found our dearest human friend something relieved from the state she was in when the messenger was sent off; but I was shocked to see her so utterly worn away—reduced to mere shadow. Her having but four or five days before (as informed by letter) been able to bear being drawn out in a Bath chair for a mile or two, sometimes twice in a day, and able to walk about the house, as she informed me in a letter, with the aid of a stick, had left me unprepared to see her so totally prostrated. She had suffered in the night of Tuesday, a sudden and formidable recurrence of the worst symptoms. I have never, since the beginning of her illness, been sanguine of her recovery to even the most moderate degree of anything like health. Dr. S. plainly told me when at Overn (I requested him to be explicit), that the omens were decidedly stronger on the side of fear than of hope; but he did allow the hope that she might partially and for a while recover.

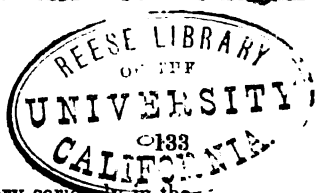
“There is no question left now; she is entirely confined to the bed from which I have not the faintest hope she will ever rise again. The internal disorganization has proved itself extreme, and beyond all probability, if not possibility, of repair. She is so feeble as not to be able to converse but for a little while at a time, even though (which is wonderful and merciful) she suffers hardly anything that can be called *pain*. And evidently she is calmly resigning, quietly withdrawing from, everything of this world, excepting her affection for us who are to survive her. In respect to health, her life has been, for many years past, an afflictive one; borne with the greatest fortitude and patience, but required a great and constant exertion of those virtues. Partly owing to this invincible ill-health, and partly to a pensive tendency of mind, her piety has been often tinged with the more gloomy order of feelings and reflections. From all this, I believe, she is near a final escape. She *may* linger for weeks; S. says there is no certainty, as to time, in the prognostics. The malady can be somewhat tempered by medical care; but any considerable sudden aggravation of it might be speedily fatal, and against this there is no security on the ground of present signs. I shall of course remain here to await events—how unwilling I am to say, ‘*the event!*’”

Soon after Mr. Foster's arrival at Bourton, the symptoms of

immediate danger were so much diminished, that Mrs. Foster expressed a hope that she should be able to return shortly to Stapleton. Under these circumstances, Mr. Foster ventured to leave Bourton, and after spending a day or two at Cheltenham, reached home Sept. 7th. In a letter to Mr. Easthope (Sept. 9), he says, "I remember your kind request at parting to be informed of any intelligence I might receive of my dear and estimable wife; the pensive thought of whom often came on me amidst our walks and lively dialogues, and comes on me now, that I am in solitude with habitual impression. I have a letter to-day from Dr. Stenson, describing her situation as not materially different since the day we left Bourton; only he thinks she becomes perceptibly weaker. He thinks she may linger a considerable time, but that a more speedy result, not a quite sudden one, would be no cause for surprise." . . . In a postscript, he added, "I shall return to Bourton in two or three weeks at most; possibly in a shorter time." The possibility here apprehended, was, indeed, very soon to be verified. On the following day he wrote to Mr. Hill: "Left quite alone for some hours in the house, I have been walking about the different rooms, and looking at the various objects, the fire-places, the books, the furniture, the prints suspended round the walls, with the pensive and mournful consideration,—‘She will see these apartments, will be seen in them, no more.’ There is a strange sinking of the heart at the thought.

"I do not at all remember what was the description I gave when I wrote to you from Bourton; it must, I think, have been about that time that she appeared somewhat better; that she *was* much better, as to the original and inveterate malady. . . . When that malady appeared to be in a great measure subdued, by the use of strong medical means, we were beginning to promise ourselves that she would recover strength; and, in fact, she did so, in some degree, for a little while; but it appears as if the constitution had been too completely sapped to leave strength enough for reaction. . . . She happily does not suffer, nor has, during all the illness, suffered, much pain, an exemption for which I am thankful. . . . If the next information be that there is a marked progress of decline, I shall immediately return to await and attend the last event. I have written to her twice within the three days that I have been here. As our watchmen have now just begun their nightly rounds for the darker half of the year, I shall cease to be in much apprehension for the safety

DEATH OF MRS. FOSTER.



of the house, a consideration which presses very seriously in the neighborhood of this city, which the stupid, wretched magistracy leave almost wholly unprotected. There has been a man to come each night to sleep in the house while I have been away ; but that is a very imperfect security, and I feel it a cause for thankfulness, and for some degree of wonder, that the house has not been broken into. An outhouse *was* broken open.

" My dear wife is enabled to maintain a calm resignation to the heavenly Father's will ; and the impending event, so mournful for us, will be to her the entrance on endless felicity. She has long been under the discipline of the good Spirit ; often saying, she felt it indispensable that that discipline should be a *hard* process, to subdue the evils of the mind. She has, with invincible patience, borne ill health, and even been thankful for it sometimes, for its salutary operation. She has also felt, even from childhood, a tendency to gloomy reflections on the perversities of the heart, the awful mysteries of the divine government of the world, and our unknown future destinies. All this has less beset her during this long affliction than ever before ; and, from all this she will exultingly escape and emerge at—why do I say I *fear* ?—no distant time, in all present probability. But oh, I *should* have been glad to detain her here ! But *she* says, and I would say, 'Thy will be done.' "\* But on the very day that these lines were written the mortal conflict terminated. The narrative will be best given in Foster's own words : " I was not allowed," he says,† " to stay long at Stapleton : a letter received from Dr. Stenson on Sunday (Sept. 9), signifying an increase of the fatal indications, had determined me to return hither very shortly, to wait the inevitable event. . . . His second letter reached me on Tuesday, with the very unexpected information, that the fatal event was already past. As I had left her in possession of such a remainder of her slowly diminishing strength, as to be able to sit up the greater part of each day, I had no impression that she could be so very near the fatal hour, though perfectly convinced it was not very far off : I expected a number of weeks to intervene. She survived the time I left her but four days." . . . " On two or three of those very days she rose from her bed, and passed a considerable time in another room : they informed me she retained the full possession of her facul-

\* To Mr. Hill, Stapleton, Sept. 10, 1832

† To J. Easthope, Esq., M.P., Bourton, Sept. 13, 1832.

ties to the very last ; she partly raised herself in the bed to receive some medical preparation, then lay deliberately down, and in less than ten minutes expired, without the slightest struggle, or apparent suffering of any kind. The event was so sudden that her children, in another part of the house, could not be called into the room before it was passed.”\* . . . . “I have come hither (last night) so considerable a time since the event, that I am dissuaded from seeing, as I wished to do, the deserted mortal relic, which will be removed early the day after to-morrow, and with the very least possible ceremony. If conventional usages did not come obstinately in the way, my infinite preference would be, that the last office should be performed at the midnight hour, in perfect silence, and with no attendance besides the parties immediately interested. What have a number of gazing, indifferent spectators to do with my loss, or my demeanor or feeling regarding it ?”

In a letter of the same date to another friend, Foster says,† “I am grateful to heaven, that from the beginning of her illness quite to the end, she suffered nothing that could be called positive pain. This happily contributed to her maintaining an unalterable patience and tranquillity throughout her whole illness ; there was never, I am assured, *one* expression of impatience, murmuring, or fretfulness. She has indeed been always remarkable for a firm and quiet fortitude ; and she has had much to require it, through many years of ill health, gradually descending at last, since the beginning of this year, to positive illness. When a person’s ill health is habitual, one month or year much like another, and complaints seldom and very briefly uttered, it is the fault of associates, who are themselves in exempt condition, not to show or feel the due attention or sympathy. And it now comes upon me, with some degree of regret and self-reproach, that I too seldom testified the due sympathetic interest on this subject. It was an interest which she most rarely claimed, and therefore should have been the more spontaneously given. It is striking to observe how a thing not felt or thought of toward a friend alive rises up into a palpable reproach, when that friend has gone beyond the reach of receiving friendly attentions any more. Not that I am deeply accusing myself in this respect : I loved and valued her deeply, cordially, and continually, and delighted to reciprocate her devoted affection ; but it is strange to

\* To Mrs. Saunders, Sept. 29, 1832.

† To B. Stokes, Esq.

observe how anything that was *less* than the most watchful attention to what she suffered from constantly defective health can now come back to memory as a cause of regret.

"It excites a pensive emotion to take back, just now, some small things which I left in her keeping when I set off for Cheltenham; and still more so, to receive back *unopened* two letters which I wrote to her, of a consolatory nature, within the first three days that I was at Stapleton, *both* of which arrived here after she had departed, but, therefore, ceased to need human sympathy and consolation. I am not sure that I shall ever open them.

". . . It has been an extremely advantageous circumstance for my wife, and for those who have had the principal care of attendance on her, that the period of her illness was appointed to fall on exactly the finest, brightest and warmest part of the year, from May to September, during which, besides the nights being so short, she had, and greatly enjoyed, the exhilaration of being drawn out, about the garden and the vicinity, in a Bath chair, admiring the flowers, and refreshed by the fine air and sunshine, which I really believe she had not enjoyed so much during several whole years before. Here too she had the utmost advantage of medical skill and care every day and hour, and of all manner of affectionate attendance and accommodation. On account of the girls especially, it is a very favorable circumstance, that her decease took place here, instead of at home, thus averting one melancholy association, which would have fixed itself inseparably and permanently on the place."

It is very gratifying to record a spontaneous and truly delicate tribute of respect paid at this season of sorrow by persons most of whom had little acquaintance with the bereaved family beyond what arose from having lived in the same vicinity;—a beautiful contrast to the vulgar curiosity usually excited by such events, and to what the heart of the mourner equally shrinks from, a busy, ostentatious, garrulous condolence. "The last offices were rendered," says Mr. Foster,\* "on Saturday. I think I expressed in my last my extreme repugnance to a large assemblage of indifferent spectators. This feeling by some means became known in the village; and I have to mention it as a very singular mark of delicacy and respect, that the inhabitants all, with hardly an ex-

\* To J. Easthope, Esq., Bourton, Sept. 17, 1832.

ception, stayed away ; so that, excepting the persons whose services were necessary, none but a very few from some distance, unapprised of the preventive consideration, were at the spot. I shall charge Mrs. Stenson to find means to make it known that the people have my acknowledgments for this unexpected kindness."

On Foster's return to Stapleton, he wrote immediately to Mr. Hill, with whom his friendship had acquired a deeper and melancholy interest, from the striking coincidences in their domestic trials. "I have returned *hither*," he says, "but have an utter repugnance to say, returned *home* ; that name is applicable no longer. You may be sure I am grateful for your kind sympathy and suggestions of consolation ; not the less so for its being too true, that there is a weight on the heart which the most friendly human hand cannot remove. The melancholy fact is, that my beloved, inestimable companion has left me. It comes upon me—in evidence, how varied and sad ! and yet, for a moment, sometimes I feel as if I could not realize it as true. There is something that seems to say, *Can it be* that I shall see her no more—that I shall still, one day after another, find she is not here, that her affectionate voice and look will never accost me ; the kind grasp of her hand never more be felt ; that when I would be glad to consult her, make an observation to her, address to her some expression of love, call her "my dear wife," as I have done so many thousand times, it will be in vain, she is not here ? Several times, a considerable number—even since I followed her to the tomb, a momentary suggestion of thought has been, as one and another circumstance has occurred, "I will tell Maria of this." Even this very day, when I parted with Dr. Stenson, who out of pure kindness accompanied me a long stage on the road, there was actually for a transient instant a lapse of mind into the idea of telling her how very kind he had been. I have not suffered, nor expect to feel any overwhelming emotions, any violent excesses of grief ; what I expect to feel is, a long repetition of pensive monitions of my irreparable loss ; that the painful truth will speak itself to me again, and still again, in long succession, often in solitary reflection (in which I feel the most), and often as objects come in my sight, or circumstances arise, which have some association with her who is gone. The things which belonged to her with a personal appropriation ; things which she used or particu-

larly valued ; things which she had given me, or I had given her ; her letters or my own to her ; the corner of the chamber where I know she used to pray ; her absence—unalterable absence—at the hour of family worship, of social reading, of the domestic table ; her no more being in her place to receive me on my return home from occasional absence ; the thought of what she would have said, or how she would have acted, on subjects or occasions that come in question ; the remembrance how she did speak or act in similar instances ;—all such things as these will renew the pensive emotions, and tell me still again what I have lost,—what that was, and how great its value, which the sovereign Disposer has in his unerring wisdom taken away. Yes, it is *He* that has taken away what it was *He* that gave me, and what was so dear and valuable to me ; and I would not, I think I do not, rebel against his dispensation ; I would not even repine or complain beyond that degree which he will regard with a merciful compassion. I should, and would be, thankful for having been indulged with the possession so long. Certainly, neither of us would, if such an exception *might* be made to an eternal law, recall our dear departed companions from their possession of that triumph over sin, and sorrow, and death, to which they have been exalted. However great our deprivation, how transcendently greater is their advancement in the condition of existence ! And we should be unworthy to be loved by them still, as I trust that even at this very hour we are, if we could for a moment entertain such a wish.

. . . “I do hope, that through the mercy of the Father of spirits, even this loss shall be turned to gain to myself and the children, the care of whom now devolves on me in a much greater degree than heretofore. I hope that the solemn and affectionate thought of her who is gone from us, will, for each of us, give a powerful reinforcement to every admonition and persuasion of religion ; that the aspiration,—‘May we meet her again, where friends will part no more,’ will often be an affecting motive to follow in the path by which she has gone to immortal happiness. What an inestimable advantage it is for the effect of instruction to her daughters ; that she can, with perfect confidence, be cited to them ; and recalled by their own thoughts, as a nearly faultless pattern, in both judgment and conduct. Her intellect was strong and disciplined, her course of action was invariably conscientious in the highest degree ; her piety was deep and reflective, bearing, how-



ever, very much from this reflectiveness itself, a somewhat more melancholy tinge than I would desire for her daughters. In thinking of them, I will not dwell on the consideration,—how different to their juvenile feelings, after a while, will be this loss, from what it must continue to be to mine. May God enable us, my dear friend, with ever increasing force of faith, to commit ourselves and our children to his mercy and his power.”

In the summer of 1833 Mr. Foster made a second excursion into North Wales. Previously, however, he suffered another painful loss in the removal of Mr. Anderson, with whom (though their acquaintance was of comparatively recent date) he was on terms, as has been already noticed, of most cordial intimacy, and whose abilities and character he held in very high esteem. “I expect to set off for Worcester,” he says,\* “on the expedition to North Wales to-morrow evening, and shall be absent, I am afraid, not less than about four weeks. I have little spirit or inclination for such an adventure; but ever since the former one (just twenty-one years back!) there has been an understanding between friend Stokes and me, that some time or other, if life continued, we were to do the same thing once more; and lately he wrote to me, that there occurred, just now, a more favorable opportunity, with respect to the mode of conveyance, than he could expect; and that, as we were growing old, the thing must be “soon or never.” I consented; not without a wish, that it could rather have been left to the uncertainties of *another* year.

“I may well say ‘uncertainties,’—for how little, at this time last year, did I anticipate, that in less than twelve short months more, that most valuable friend, Anderson, would be in his grave! His health was habitually not good; but such common things as head-aches, and disorders of the stomach, are not held to be omens of a man’s not living to complete his forty-ninth year. Till *very* near the end there was not, that I know of, any suspicion of disorder decidedly organic; but the *post mortem* examination disclosed an inveterate disease of the *omentum*, and a morbid state of the liver, of which latter, indeed, there was some previous evidence within the last few weeks. Though a severe attack of the influenza was deemed to have accelerated the mortal process, Dr. Prichard pronounced, after the examination, that the inveterate disease would, in no long time, have been mortal. He (Anderson) was over here only ten days before his death; refused the offer of a friend, who

\* To the Rev. Josiah Hill, June 27, 1833.

brought him in a fly, to procure another for his return, but suffered much in walking home ; and, from that time (though for several days he had the students to attend him at his own house), he rapidly sunk, with little pain, however, into a state of utter debility and prostration. When I saw him the day before his death, he could not speak much above a whisper. Dr. P., who came while I was with him, said there were some indications more favorable than on the preceding day, but whether he retained any hope of the patient's continued amendment I do not know ; Anderson himself did not show any consciousness that he was past recovery to the last, I was told. His mind was uniformly tranquil, and the attendants said he retained his faculties till within two hours of the end, during which he was so gradually and quietly sinking, that it was hardly perceptible when he actually expired. Dr. P. attended him most assiduously, with all the kind anxiety of an affectionate friend.

"Every friend sympathizes with the family ; but the great irreparable loss is to the Academy, which his able and indefatigable exertions had contributed to render, beyond all comparison, more efficient to its object than it has ever been before at any time since its institution. I have no doubt, that during the time of his tutorship, the young men have made more real improvement (the measure and manner of acquirement being taken into account) in *one* year, than they usually did before in *four*, or certainly in *three*. He assisted and excited their minds in other ways, in every way, as well as in the bare specific business of learning ; and never spared himself any labor by which he could hope to benefit them. He had a strong and sagacious intellect, and the extent of his acquirements was quite wonderful, especially considering that he had had but very slender advantages in his early life. He possessed a genuine, habitual, and rational piety ; and was *very* benevolent, in spite of a certain acerbity and sometimes roughness of manner, which made some people afraid of him, and others not to like him. The sense of his worth, however, had progressively gained ground, though but few comparatively, even to the last, were *fully* apprised of it."\*

\* The Rev. William Anderson was born October 18, 1784, at Durno, in the parish of Garioch, Aberdeenshire ; his parents were pious members of the church of Scotland. For several years he was first a scholar, and then a teacher in a sabbath evening-school at Aberdeen. When scarcely seventeen he became a member of the Independent Church meeting in George Street. Two years later he adopted antipædobaptist views, and was bap-

In a letter to Mr. Stokes, who had requested Foster to commit to writing his recollections of their journey in the principality, he says, "As to any sketches of our long and delightful tour I have entirely failed. I found it in vain to call on my memory to fill up, in even the most meagre manner, what was very little more than a mere marking of the names of the successive places that distinguished our stages. That most excellent tactic of our captain to have us off always in the early morning, gave no time for memoranda in the beginning of the day, and at the end of it one was fit for nothing but to go to sleep. It was truly a fine and luxurious excursion. In a favorable hour for recalling the distant and the past, one can bring to the 'mind's eye' many spectacles and forms of sublimity and beauty, among the latter never forgetting the millions of fox-gloves, honey-suckles, and wild-roses. These have bloomed on my imagination ever since. . . . Taken altogether, the tour was a vastly gratifying adventure; portions and scenes of it, sometimes one and sometimes another, return on my imagination with a very pleasing interest. It combined many circumstances and advantages which can very rarely come so fortunately together. I do not know that it was the less interesting to me for the thought which was often suggested in the striking or beautiful situations, 'I shall see this no more.' There was another pensive sentiment in regard to my return home; it was *no longer home* in the same sense as it had been on the return from absences and excursions in former years. If I was to see no more the interesting objects beheld in the journey, I was also to see no more the person who was always before ready to receive me with an affectionate welcome. She was gone to behold scenes, how amazingly different from all that we were contemplating! But we also, my dear friend, are going fast on our way in the same journey, toward the same mysterious re-

tized in the river Don by the Rev. T. Edmonds, since of Cambridge, who was then a student at the University. In February, 1804, he removed to London, and in the following year entered the Bristol Baptist College, where he continued till the close of 1808. After leaving Bristol, he preached for some time at Devonport, then at Kislisbury, near Northampton; and in 1809 settled at Dunstable, where he remained sixteen years, till his removal to Bristol in 1825. While at Dunstable, in addition to his pastoral duties, he contributed several articles to the Eclectic Review, wrote a "History of the Russian Empire," and republished, with notes and a second part, an extract from Jeremy Taylor's "Liberty of Prophesying," under the title of "The Baptists Justified." For a very able and interesting sketch of Mr. Anderson's life and character, the reader is referred to a memoir inserted in the Baptist Magazine, Oct. and Nov., 1833.

gions. What a different kind and degree of emotion, surprise, amazement, awaits us there, from all that we have ever felt in the view of these terrestrial scenes!"

Information reached Mr. Foster on his return from Wales of another approaching bereavement, which must have affected him more deeply than any save that *one*, a sense of which never left him even in his most cheerful and social moments. "Our old and most excellent friend Hughes," he says to Mr. Coles,\* "is still lingering on the very verge—and with what a happy prospect beyond! To-day I received from him a message conveyed in a note from his son to Mr. Cottle, expressing a wish to hear from me once more, a last expression of the friendship of forty years. I shall write this final adieu as to this world with very pensive feelings, but with congratulation on both his retrospect and his prospect. He has been eminently faithful in the great Master's service. How striking to consider what our valued friends, one after another, are gone to see and are going to see! And oh! what is that scene, that manner, that felicity of existence, which some of them now possess, and this one friend more is, at the utmost, but a few short weeks at a distance from? . . . It is a strikingly sensible, specific, and attractive point of relation to the other world, that we acquire by the fact that some of those are there whom we have valued and loved so recently here.

"At your age (though a number of years beyond that of Mr. Anderson) it is to be hoped that a very considerable tract of time remains for useful service. At mine any probable calculation becomes reduced to a very narrow space. But for having looked to see the day of the month in order to date this letter, the day would have passed off without my being aware that it is the day that completes my sixty-third year, what is denominated the *grand climacteric*. I deeply deplore not having lived to worthier purpose, both for myself and others; and earnestly hope and pray that whatever of life remains may be employed much more faithfully to the great end of existence. But with this self-condemning review, and with nothing but an uncertain and possibly small remainder of life in prospect, how emphatically oppressive would be the conscious situation, if there were not that great propitiation, that redeeming sacrifice, to rest upon for pardon and final safety."

The deeply pensive impression made on Foster's mind by his

\* Sept. 17, 1833. Mr. Hughes died Oct. 3.

great domestic bereavement, and the removal of Hall and Anderson, so soon to be followed by that of Hughes, was prolonged by another similar event, one not involving, it is true, a dissolution of intimate friendship or even of long acquaintance, but yet fitted, from the juncture at which it happened, and the interesting character and position of the individual, to excite no ordinary emotion. "The most remarkable thing of late," Foster says, in a letter to Mr. Hill (Oct. 8, 1833), "is the visit, so soon to end in the death, in the house behind our garden, of the Rajah Rammo-hunroy (the title of Rajah, of no very defined import, was conferred on him by the king of Delhi, the remaining shadow of the great Mogul). I had entertained a strong prepossession against him, had no wish to see him, but could not avoid it, when he was come to the house of our young landlady, Miss Castle.

"My prejudice could not hold out half an hour after being in his company. He was a very pleasing and interesting man; intelligent, and largely informed, I need not say—but unaffected, friendly, and, in the best sense of the word, polite. I passed two evenings in his company, only, however, as an unit in large parties; the latter time, however, in particular and direct conversation with him, concerning some of the doctrines of the Indian philosophers, the political, civil, and moral state of the Hindoos. In the former instance, when the after-dinner company consisted of Dr. Carpenter, and sundry other doctors and gentlemen, churchmen and dissenters, he was led a little into his own religious history and present opinions. He avowed his general belief in Christianity as attested by miracles (of which I had understood that he made very light some ten or a dozen years since), but said that the internal evidence had had by much the greatest force on his mind. In so very heterogeneous a company, there was no going into any very specific particulars. Carpenter, in whose company I have since dined at Dr. Prichard's, very confidently claims him as one of the "modern Unitarian" school. . . . It may be that he was finally near about in agreement with that school, but I do not believe that they have any exact knowledge of his opinions. . . . Here he went to several churches, and to hear Jay on a week-day at Bridge Street, as well as sometimes to Lewin's Mead, where the family in which he was visiting constantly attend. There is, or a few days since there was, a great perplexity how to dispose of his remains.\*

\* "The knowledge that the Rajah had, in various ways, manifested soli-

He had signified his wish not to be committed to any *ecclesiastical* burying-ground, but if it might be so managed, deposited in some quiet corner of the *profane* earth. His principal London friend (a Mr. Hale from Linc.) thinks it the most desirable that he were conveyed to Linc. During the greater part of his short illness (it was an effluem of the brain), he was in a state of such torpor as to be incapable of any communication. Dr. Prichard, who attended him during the latter days, says, he did not utter, while he was with him, ten distinct sentences. As far as I have heard there was *nothing* said to indicate the state of his mind. There were actions (of his hands, &c.) which his own attendants said were the usual ones which accompanied his devotional exercises. To me, and several of our order of friends, who were, the latter evening to which I have referred (at Mrs. Cox's) in such close and interesting conversation with him, then apparently in perfect health, but then within hardly two days of the commencement of his fatal illness, it was emphatically striking, nine or ten days after, to think of him as no longer in our world. This event, together with the almost sudden removal of Anderson (and if my old friend from youth, Hughes, be not already gone, he is on the very last brink of life) seem to press on me, with a *taxable presence*, as it were, of the other world. And then where is *she* that was with me so lately! so lately—for it is amazing *how* rapidly thirteen months have passed away—where is *she*? and where is, my dear friend, your beloved companion that *was*—but that *will be again*? May Heaven prepare us to meet them ere-a-while, with ecstatic joy—joy to them, as well as to us; for with rapturous emotion, they will welcome, when they arrive, those whom they have left behind!" . . .

citude to preserve his state with a view both to his usefulness and to the security of his respect, and the belief that it must be ascertained if he were buried during his lifetime with his arms at his disposal, and if the last moment of his existence, in any of the usual regularities. Besides that, the fatal and repeatedly expressed wish, that in case of his death in England, a small one of freedom should not be borne out for a short time, and a small one should not be for the great one, and the respect to the grave being to be borne out of it. Every difficulty, however, was removed by the offer of Mr. Hale, . . . to accompany me to the grave, and being attended, and in a short time near the grave, under some five time. There the grave, and the grave being was entered on the last of that day, about two p.m. The coffin was borne on men's shoulders, with a pall, and set down in the grave, within my reach, and in silence. . . . Three men followed me to the grave, and accompanied there, were his son and two sons-in-law, . . . members of the families of Stapleton-grave and Briston-grave, the grandsons of Mr. Hale, and two of her nearest relatives, Mr. Hale, Mr. Pether, and Mr. Jerrard, together with several ladies," &c.—*Dr. Carpenter's Inquest, Appendix, p. 122.*

The Serampore controversy, in addition to his domestic concerns, so fully absorbed Foster's attention, that for nearly nine years he prepared nothing for the press, with the exception of the "Observations on Mr. Hall as a Preacher," and a new edition (the ninth) of the Essays, after subjecting them to a final revision at the suggestion of Mr. Anderson, "the acute literary friend" alluded to in the preface; besides two letters on the Church and the Voluntary Principle, which appeared in the *Morning Chronicle*, Oct. 2 and 3, 1834; and three letters on the Ballot in the same Journal, April 24, 25, and 27, 1835.

In 1837, when the *Eclectic Review* passed into the hands of its present editor, Foster allowed his name to stand in the list of contributors, but without pledging himself to more than an occasional article. In writing to Dr. Price (Feb. 24, 1837), he says, "Not one of the Oxford Tracts has come in my way. There is a dozen of the men named in your muster-roll, much more qualified than I am, to take account of such a business. But has that little knot of Papists any such hold on any considerable section of the 'religious public,' as fairly to call for a *dissenting* proclamation against them? In so recluse a life, I have very little information about the dimensions in which any religious or church peculiarity stands before the public. I very rarely see any of the contemporary publications of *any* kind, in books or periodicals, with the exception of the two leading Quarterly Reviews. . . . I am sorry to be making this sort of pleading off. I did, however, when you were here, represent (I think very expressly) that I could not engage myself for more than a very inconsiderable and unfrequent quantum of service. If I can, or rather *could*, do anything in the composition way, there are some tasks for a more permanent purpose which I ought to attempt; and am mortified to have, from year to year, left untouched, partly from the miserable laboriousness to me of any sort of composition, and partly from a haunting consciousness of incompetence.

. . . . "As to *reading*, why one can read little else than the newspapers just at present. I do not know whereabouts, on the thermometer, you may be in political concerns; if high, you will have exulted at the division in the House of Commons, which I have but just now seen in the *Morning Chronicle*.\* To say

\* Lord F. Egerton's motion, for the abolition instead of the amendment of the Irish Municipal Corporations, which, after three nights' debate, was rejected by 322 to 242.

that the present crisis is most portentous, is no common-place extravagance of phrase ; for evidently the consequences will, ere long, be dreadful, if, by the resistance of the execrable tory and church faction, the measures in favor of Ireland shall continue to be frustrated."

Within the period to which this part of the memoir relates, Foster was deprived of his only brother, and of one of his few early associates. . "As to companions and friends of early times," he says,\* "they have almost all left the world. My only brother (the only one who lived to maturity) died some months since, my junior by several years. I had not seen him for more than thirty years, having never, during all that time, revisited my native place in Yorkshire. Now I probably never shall ; for the only other person, with whom I had maintained any communication, Mr. Fawcett (son of Dr. Fawcett, my old tutor), a friend of my youth, of about the same age, and a very valuable man, lately went the way of all the earth. The unlooked-for intelligence did cause me a very pensive feeling ; it broke the last link of my connection with the scenes and society of my early life ; all would be strange and foreign to me if I were to go thither now ; very few persons alive with whom I was ever in any sense acquainted ; perhaps not one with whom it would not be mutually a difficult effort to retrace anything in person that either had ever seen before. The very localities, I am told by one who has rather lately been there, are strangely transformed : —roads turned ; woods cut down ; free open tracts occupied and built upon ; romantic glens, where I had so many solitary rambles along by their wild brooks, *profaned*, as I should then have called it, if I could have anticipated such a change, by manufacturing, and the swarming, noisy activity of a population of a temperament infinitely alien from reflective, pensive, and imaginative musings.

"It is in vain to wonder—on supposition those scenes had *not* become changed, and that I were now to revisit them, and wander alone a number of hours in one or another of them—how I should feel now in comparison (if I had remembrance enough to make the comparison) with the feelings of those times. But how emphatic would the consciousness be, that though *they* were the same, *I* was prodigiously changed ! Though the feelings of the early time might have often been pensive, tinged with a degree

\* To the Rev. Josiah Hill, Feb. 22, 1838.



of melancholy, still there was the vital *substratum*, so to call it, of youth and anticipation. An interval of more than forty years makes all the difference between the morning of life and its evening; the mind, in the one position, occupied with imagination, conjecture, possibilities, resolutions, hopes;—in the other, looking back to see that visionary speculation reduced to the humility of an experience and reality, in which there is much to regret and much for self-reproach; and looking forward to behold, in near approach, *another* future, of how different an aspect from that presented to the youthful spirit! Here, my friend, we stand, yourself at no great distance behind me. What a solemn and mighty difference it is, that whereas we *then* beheld LIFE before us, we now behold DEATH. Oh, what cause for earnest care, and strife, and supplication to heaven; that when the moment comes, which every moment is bringing nearer, that we shall have passed that portentous shade, and behold the amazing prospect beyond it opening upon us, it may present itself under the light of the divine mercy, beaming upon us from Him who has the keys of death and the invisible world."

---

## LETTERS.

### CLXX. TO THE REV. THOMAS COLES.

*Bourton, September 13, 1832.*

MY DEAR SIR,—In addressing to you a few lines in relation to the mournful scene in which we are to be indebted to your kindness on Saturday, I entreat you to let me fully assure myself I will not feel as if I were assuming to *prescribe* to you in your ministerial character, while I just take the liberty of saying what are the feelings and wishes of all the family party, and emphatically my own. These wishes would be that the service might be brief, and with *the least possible of any personal references*.

I am perfectly sure that the dear deceased would have earnestly deprecated any marked reference to *her*; and as to the survivors, all of them, and myself especially—I need not say you can perfectly understand that it is a sorrow that seeks privacy, that earnestly shrinks from public gaze and curiosity.

But for the consideration of what is conventionally regarded as due on such an occasion, my own preference—I may say infinite preference—

would be that it were an office performed at midnight, in perfect silence, and with no attendance but that of the parties immediately concerned. The vulgarizing curiosity, what will be said of the deceased—how the survivors comport themselves, whether they appeared distressed or stoical—which of them the most or least—and all the other circumstances of the occasion—are repugnant and irksome in the last degree. Therefore the utmost brevity and abstinence from personal references that can comport with what you can feel the propriety of the occasion, is what we shall feel very grateful to you to maintain. In any reference to the relatives, in the address or in the prayer, will you permit me to entreat it of your friendship not to individualize. Any distinct pointed reference to me individually—though I most sincerely believe that no man in the world would do it with more delicacy and kind appropriateness than yourself—would be extremely painful, so that I should earnestly wish each sentence and each word to be the last. If you should even think this a morbid excess, yet let me entreat your kind indulgence to the weakness: there is, at any rate, no affectation in it. . . .

---

CLXXI. TO THE REV. JOSIAH HILL

*Bourton, September 13, 1832*

. . . . It has repeatedly occurred to my thoughts there is something remarkably parallel between your experience and mine. You lost a favorite son of just, I think, the same age as mine, within a short interval of the same time. The duration of my happy union was nearly twenty-five years; must not that have been *very* nearly the same term as in your case? Were not you the senior to your wife by a few years? So was I. Mine departed at just the age of fifty-six—how near was that to your wife's?—probably a few years less;—perhaps, indeed, hardly fifty. Even you are *approaching* old age,—though I suppose some years short of sixty-two. Both our dear wives left us at what might, in a certain comparative sense, be called an *immature* age;—from fifty to fifty-six may be so accounted. Both our wives suffered a protracted decline. Were not you absent at the exact moment when yours expired—or at least when she could speak to you no more? Each of us has two surviving children. I need not add, that we both deeply loved them, were beloved tenderly by them—have a perfect assurance they are now celestially happy—would not recall them if we could—hope to meet them again in eternal affection.

Do advert *distinctly* to each of these conjectures, when you shall favor me with a letter. I hope we shall return to Stapleton in less than a week. And a letter received from you *there*, as in a *comparative* solitude, will be of more value to me than received during the divers arrangements for moving, which will occupy the interval here, after the last sad transaction.

## CLXXII. TO THE REV. JOHN FAWCETT.

October 19, 1832.

MY DEAR FRIEND. . . . If you had been personally acquainted with her whom the sovereign Disposer, in perfect wisdom and goodness I know, has taken from me, after a happy union of very nearly a quarter of a century, you would have had the most perfect evidence of the eminent value which you ascribe to her, chiefly on my own constant testimony.

She was in all respects eminently estimable. Her intellect was of superior order; clear, sagacious, and of extensive application. Her perception (that which belongs to taste and feeling rather than to bare understanding) was exquisitely just and discriminative. She was conscientious in all things; and a habitual piety pervaded her thoughts and her life. But that piety was of a nature involving much that was pen- sive and even painful. She constantly said that a hard discipline had been requisite to establish and maintain its predominance in her spirit. It was apt to be invaded by gloomy sentiments respecting the awful moral condition of our nature, and the tremendously mysterious economy of the divine government of this world. This tendency, existing in a considerable degree from even childhood, was no doubt augmented by her long ill health. The exercise of faith in the divine goodness was, therefore, often a painful struggle, requiring a resolute effort to repress the propensity to wide and gloomy speculation, and to preserve that submissive humility, which, however, she *was* enabled to preserve in an exemplary degree. She was rigorous of judging of herself, while (though of very fastidious taste) candid in judging of others—increasingly so, she would say, the longer she lived, and the more she reflected on the evils of her own mind. But she has passed out of this sphere of darkness, and now exults in a final deliverance from all that affects the body or the mind. . . .

## CLXXIII. TO THE REV. JOSIAH HILL.

October 29, 1832.

MY DEAR SIR,— . . . Your letter, like the preceding ones, is greatly in sympathy with my own state and feelings. I earnestly hope there will be the same conformity in that most important point that you mention—namely, a *spiritually beneficial* result of the painful visitation; and I hope I may say that thus far it *has* been so; but am very solicitous it may be so in permanent continuance, to the very end of life; “solicitous,” I have good reason to say, when I recollect, with deep regret, how many former admonitions (but none so impressive and affecting as this) have gradually lost their efficacy. A certain conscious tendency to religious inertness has sometimes brought to me the menacing suggestion, that I *needed* some more solemn and striking measure of discipline from

the Father of spirits to rouse and impel me. I had even sometimes, since my loved wife's decline in health became more sensible and threatening, had the pensive thought—"Suppose she should be soon taken from me—how should I feel *that* as an admonitory chastisement? may not *that* be inflicted upon me, to bring me nearer to God and heaven; to excite me to pass the residue of my time with a most constant earnest reference to eternity?" That *reverting to the past*—living more in the past—which you describe as your experience, is *partly* realized in mine, and probably will be more so. There is a strong tendency backward to the periods and scenes and incidents spread over the long space of the more than thirty years of our mutual attachment; a recollection vivified at times by a look into one and another of the five hundred and more letters of our correspondence. But as yet, this reverting tendency is often interfered with by amazement at the present; by a feeling—is it possible that the relation between us is so changed, is become so *stupendously* different? Can it be—how is it—what is it—that we are now not inhabitants of the same world—that each has to think of the other as in a perfectly different economy of existence? Whither is she gone—in what manner does she consciously realize to herself the astonishing change—how does she look at herself as no longer inhabiting a mortal tabernacle—in what manner does she recollect her state as only a few weeks since—in what manner does she think, and feel, and act, and communicate with other spiritual beings—what manner of vision has she of God and the Saviour of the world—how does she review and estimate the course of discipline through which she had been prepared for the happy state where she finds herself—in what manner does she look back on *death*, which she has so recently passed through,—and does she plainly *understand* the nature of a phenomenon so awfully mysterious to the view of mortals? How does she remember and feel respecting *us*, respecting *me*? Is she associated with the spirits of her departed son, and two children who died in infancy? Does she indulge with delight a confident anticipation that we shall, after a while, be added to her society? If she should think of it as, with respect to some of us, many years, possibly, before such an event, does that appear a *long* time in prospect, or has she begun to account of duration according to the great laws of eternity? Earnest imaginings and questionings like these arise without end, and still, still, there is no answer, no revelation. The mind comes again and again up close to the thick black veil; but there is no perforation, no glimpse. She that loved me, and I trust loves me still, will not, cannot, must not, answer me. I can only imagine her to say, "Come and see; serve our God so that you shall come and share, at no distant time." One of the most striking circumstances to my thought and feeling is, that, in devotional exercises, though she comes on my mind in a more affecting manner than perhaps ever, *I have no longer to pray for her*. By a momentary lapse of thought I have been, I think, several times on the point of falling into an expression for her as

if still on earth; and the instant "No! no more for *her*," has been an emotion of pain, and as it were disappointment; till the thought *has* come, "*She* needs not; she is now safe, beyond the sphere of mortals and their dangers and wants, in the *possession* of all that prayer implored." Even *after* this consolatory thought there has been a pensive trace of feeling, something like pain, that sympathy, care for her welfare, should now be superfluous to her and finally extinguished.

You mentioned having, in your recollections, felt a degree of compunction for not having been as sedulous as you now feel you might have been, to promote the spiritual welfare of your dear departed companion. I believe I have more cause for such regret, and it invades me sometimes in a painful degree. Both my beloved associate and myself had the disadvantage of a naturally and habitually reserved disposition. Mine had been confirmed such by my having been during all the earlier part of my life very much a solitary being, and during many years a kind of wanderer in the earth, under circumstances which could have left no youthful promptitude to frank and as it were *necessary* ingenuousness (if I had ever had it) at the age of thirty-seven, when the domestic union took place. This caused a certain inaptitude on my part, to full habitual communicativeness on the subject of religion as *personally* applied, and, of consequence, a very great defect of habitual effort to render such religious aid as I often, even then, felt that I ought, to my dear companion. I have sometimes now, therefore, a self-reproachful reflection, which would go into something like a wish that she could be with me again for a while, in order that I might repair that great deficiency in *such a manner as her loss makes me feel that I ought to have been of this value to her*. That the fault is now irreparable, absolutely and finally so, is at times a very painful thought. The consolation is that she had a *divine* instructor, and that the great object is accomplished. This, however, does not suppress the regret that she does not, in that happy state, *owe more to me*. The thought sometimes arises in my mind, in what manner, divested of all mutual regret, may we revert to this in our communicated reminiscences in that happy world, if, as I earnestly hope, I shall meet her there again, to be separated no more? There is this thought again—"What joy it will be to her if I, and if the children, shall then have to tell her and prove to her, that the sad event of our losing her has been rendered, by the divine Spirit, a powerful mean toward our better progress in that piety which shall have prepared us for the happy re-union." . . . .

---

CLXXIV. TO SIR J. EASTHOPE, BART.

*Stapleton, Feb. 8, 1833.*

. . . . For myself, when I look at the dreadful array of affairs which our legislators have before them, and pressing on them close, and thick,

and immediate, I am the reverse of sanguine, whether I regard the question of *power* or of *will*. There is that most appalling state of Ireland. I have no degree of confidence that the ministry have even the *will* to adopt the bold, and radical, and comprehensive measures which alone could avail there. How obvious is the necessity for some imperious enactment, to compel that base, detestable landed interest, to take the burden of the poor, instead of driving them out to famish, beg, or rob, and murder, on the highway; or throwing them by tens of thousands on our coast, to devour the means of support to our own population. It would be a measure which would first astound, but speedily enrage, the whole selfishly base proprietary of Ireland. I have no hope that the ministry have the resolution for so mighty a stroke: and then the Irish church. The plain sense of the thing is, that about two-thirds, or rather four-fifths of it, ought to be cut down at once, and that proportion of the property applied to national uses. But the very notion of such a thing would be enough to consign — to one of the wards in St. Luke's. And what would — say, if Lord Grey dared even to whisper such a thing to him? And yet, unless some such thing be done, it is as clear as noon-day, that Ireland will continue a horrid scene of distraction and misery; growing, month by month, more ferociously barbarous, and to be kept down by nothing but the terror and occasional exploits of an immense standing army, at the cost, too, of this our own tax-consuming country.

The church reform in this country, too, is to be a marvellous fine thing, it seems. As an *economical* thing, a trade and money concern, it may be plentifully mended if the axe and saw, and carpenter's rule, be resolutely applied (which I do not expect); but as an *ecclesiastical* institution, an institution for *religion*, it is not worth reforming; indeed, cannot be reformed. Think of making the clergy—such a clergy as the reform-project declares them to be;—think of making them pious, zealous, spiritual, apostolic, *by act of parliament*! There is, for example, the scandalous amount of non-residence; this is to be corrected with a strong hand; the clergy shall be compelled to reside; WHAT clergy shall be so compelled? why, the very men whose non-residence proved they do not care about the spiritual welfare of the people; but only force these same men, by a law, sadly against their will, as the very terms imply, *and then they will instantly become pious, faithful, affectionate pastors,—an unspeakable blessing to the people of every parish*! They will apply themselves, with the utmost alacrity and assiduity, to their preaching, praying, visiting the sick, &c., at the very time that they are grumbling and cursing at not being any longer allowed to promenade about Brighton or Cheltenham. This most ridiculous absurdity comes of that one grand corruption of Christianity—the *state* pretending to make religious churches and Christian teachers. Of religion itself, in its own proper essence, as a personal thing, infinitely foreign to all that legislatures can enact or do, these people seem not to have the slightest idea. To think

of some ten or eleven hundred senators (Lords and Commons), sapiently deliberating on the clauses of a bill for making, *by force of said bill*, the clergy and the people pious, spiritual, conscientious!!—and all, but a scantling of them, really thinking, that this manufacture can be effected just like any other production of mechanical machinery! As a mere matter of political economy, as a more equitable distribution of emolument, as a more commodious adjustment of the support of the system, as an affair of decorum and better regulation in the habits of the clergy,—in *this* view of the business something *may* be done, and it may be well worth doing. In *this* business, therefore, let the parliamentary carpenters work away; but, alas for their intellects, if they imagine that they are *creating religion* in clergy or laity; they will only be putting the institution in a little more respectable trim, for awaiting that final demolition which is coming on all state-religious establishments.

The session now opening will be of immense interest: it is an anxious and fearful question,—“What will the government have done by this day seven months?”

But, my dear friend, how many persons, who may now be taking a deep interest in this prospective speculation, are not to stay long enough in this world to see that question answered; and how much more solemn a question it is to the individuals themselves?—what their state, their feelings, their views, will be in a world elsewhere. Few persons, at this time last year, could take a deeper interest in the great reform measure, and the results to be hoped for from it, than she who was then my wife; but she did not stay to witness any of those results, she was destined to behold something incomparably more new, and wonderful, and delightful, than anything that *can* come to pass in this land or on this planet; but how dark a veil on the whole economy of that other world! my thoughts go again and again, without end, into the unanswered and unanswerable questions:—where and what is the region, what the manner of existence, what the visions, the emotions, the employment, of that other life; and what the comparison between it and the life and the world from which the spirit has passed away? The impatiently inquiring thoughts are still constantly sent back to this one consideration, that in due time we shall ourselves go to see; and who knows how soon that time may come? At my age it cannot, at all events, be very remote; and I am incessantly admonished how fast the successive portions of time are vanishing. I am almost surprised to think, that it is this day five months since my inestimable companion left me; and thus, my dear friend, what may remain to us of life will rapidly pass away; our months, our years, if years remain, will each be gone almost before we are aware; and, unless we become most seriously and anxiously vigilant, *without our having improved them to the great last purpose of life*. I am often painfully, and even alarmingly, admonished of this last most pressing consideration; and, I trust, my dear friend, it will henceforth press on *your* mind also with all its force; and do not let your unsatisfactory remembrances of the past produce any

despondent feeling, while there is every divine assistance, so fully and mercifully offered and promised, to sincere determination and effort. Every unfavorable habit *can* be corrected; every injurious influence can be counteracted; religion *can* make us happy; and I earnestly and confidently hope that it will. . . .

---

## CLXXV. TO THE REV. JOSIAH HILL.

June 27, 1833.

. . . . I have left no space of paper for commenting on your citations of high authorities for my indoctrination in theology, in reference to the oracles stated to have been pronounced by Watson. I never thought of questioning the fact, that many pious men have had and have, in respect to their being in a state of acceptance and salvation, a certain testimony *in feeling*, not very definable, and (I would not say *independent* of, but) distinguishable from, a deliberate account taken of evidences, by what may be called a sober, investigating self-examination; but certainly there are many genuine Christians who have *not*, to their own consciousness, this happy kind of testimony; and inasmuch as there is here a very great and *dangerous liability to delusion*, it must surely be unwise and pernicious to be insisting on this to the neglect or exclusion (as W. was reported to have done) of all strict inquisition into the evidences of a definable, and so to call it, tangible kind. Have you not seen cause to believe, that in your connection this has been, to very many, a fatal mischief?\*

. . . . I am very sincerely sorry for the calamity of so prodigious a loss as you are suffering in preachers; and, may I say, *not* sorry to hear, that in other respects your denomination is so flourishing. . . .

---

## CLXXVI. TO THE REV. JOSIAH HILL.

July, 1833.

. . . . My delay in writing has been owing to an inconsiderable cause—that I would not write till I could mention that a parcel had been sent or was immediately to be sent from here. . . . The thing to be packed was Brucker's *Historia Philosophiæ*, in six quartos, a work of established reputation and immense learning. A number of years since I had it from Longman's—a fool that I was, at my age, and with fast failing sight, to think of such a thing—but it was a famous book—a sort of dictionary of all ancient and much modern wisdom (and folly too), and so, seeing it in the catalogue, I must send for it,—and that in haste too, lest some other aspirant to wisdom, as

\* On this subject see Foster's Lectures XIII. *False grounds of superiority in holiness*, p. 218, 2d ed. and Rogers' Life of Howe, pp. 495–502.



old and with such feeble eyes and slender acquirements, should lay hands on it before me. But for John, voracious of knowledge, and with I hope at least fifty years before him, it may prove a useful repository to consult occasionally. When I had it, not a sheet had ever been cut open ; it is perfectly clean, and I took the long trouble of giving every volume a firmer covering by pasting mill-boards to the sides within the blue papers. Its disappearance here will a little abate the vexation with which, as I said before, I sometimes look on these piles of books which I can never use.

There is nothing to tell you here. I hardly *ever* go into the town, and very seldom see any one that inhabits it. I think that, literally, I have spent but few hours there for several months past. There has grown upon me a kind of indisposition to see anybody, or to be seen. . . . I shall be out of date with the few friends I have—or had—in the place. I just stay with the girls, who are good and affectionate, but cannot compensate for the companion that I have lost—but would not recall, if such a thing were permitted in the divine economy. The pensive sense of that loss is at some moments almost changed into gladness by the thought of what she has gained—and what she has escaped ; and by a hope that the dispensation will be salutary to myself, in regard to the most important interest. I think it has been so hitherto in some degree. It certainly has been made the cause of very many pious emotions, and wishes, and penitential regrets, and prayers, beyond my previous habitude of mind. I go often into the *past*, as you predicted ; but often the present and the future almost predominate—the thought of her *as now*, and the anticipation of seeing her again, varied through innumerable suggestions, imaginings, and inquiries. No doubt such musings have often employed your mind also. We must remain in this darkness, and this disseverment yet a while, perhaps but a little while. But oh ! what joy to hope that through sovereign mercy we shall regain, never more to lose, the society of our beloved departed companions, and with the ultimate addition, I hope, of all those younger ones that still remain with us. May the great Father of spirits take benignant charge of us all, and grant us all to meet at length where those who are gone before us will feel ecstatic joy to receive us, all redeemed through the merit of the great Sacrifice. Both *you* three and *we* three have now some affecting relations, points of interest and attraction, with the invisible world, more than we had a few years since. I have suggested this consideration to the two children here. The deep interest of the subject has led me to think more, and to read a little more, concerning that mysterious *hades*. How strange that revelation itself has kept it so completely veiled. Many things in that economy probably could not be made intelligible to us in this our grossly material condition ; but there are many questions which could be distinctly and intelligibly answered. How striking to consider that those who were so *late*ly, with us, asking those questions in vain, have now the perfect experimental knowledge. I can image the very look with

which my departed Maria would sometimes talk or muse on this subject. The mystery, the frustration of our inquisitiveness, was equal to us both. What a stupendous difference *now*! And in her present grand advantage she knows with what augmented interest of solemn and affectionate inquisitiveness my thoughts will be still directed, and in vain, to the subject. But she knows why it is proper that I should for a while continue still in the dark,—should share no part of her new and marvelous revelation. . . .

---

## CLXXVII. TO MRS. ANDERSON.

[On the death of Mr. Anderson.]

*Stapleton, 1833.*

MY DEAR MADAM, . . . I was glad to hear you had changed the scene so far as to pass some days at Overn. The recollection of recent mournful events very often came on me amidst the beautiful and sublime scenes that I have been passing through. It appeared to me so strange to think that I should not have to tell of anything I had seen to the estimable friend with whom I had so often and so lately communicated. That he was actually no longer on earth seemed again and again what I could hardly realize as a certain fact. It was a pensive thought that there was one important person the less for me to return to. And the loss came with double force as being in addition to the irretrievable absence, the final disappearance, of one other person, to whom during a former tour over the same interesting tracts I expected to return with narratives and observations which now she hears no more.

For you there is a long train of pensive remembrances, reflections, and monitions; but I trust the benign influences of religion will both soften the painful sentiments and render them salutary in respect to the highest interests. For myself I have felt that some afflictive dispensation was *necessary* for the purpose of solemn admonition. How unapt we are to send forward our thoughts into the invisible future world, toward which we are continually approaching nearer! we have now a strong circumstance of attraction of our thoughts thitherward—a new relation formed with that world, by the removal thither, and the dwelling there, of those who were so lately our habitual and beloved companions here. . . .

---

## CLXXVII. TO THE REV. JOSEPH HUGHES.

*Sept. 18, 1833.*

. . . . The thought of my dear and ever faithful friend, as now standing at the very verge of life, has repeatedly carried me back in memory to the period of our youth, when more than forty years we were brought into habitual society, and the cordial esteem and attachment which have survived undiminished through so long a lapse of time and so much separation. Then we sometimes conjectured, but in vain, what might be

the course appointed us to run, and how long, and which might first come to the termination. Now the far greater part of that unknown appointment has been unfolded and accomplished. To me a little stage further remains under the darkness; you, my dear friend, have a clear sight almost to the concluding point. And while I feel the deepest pensiveness in beholding where you stand, with but a step between you and death, I cannot but emphatically congratulate you. I have often felt great complacency in your behalf, in thinking of the course through which Providence has led you,—complacency in regard to the great purpose of life, its improvement, its usefulness, and its discipline and preparation for a better world. You are, I am sure, grateful to the sovereign Disposer in the review of it. You have had the happiness of faithfully and zealously performing a great and good service, and can rejoice to think that your work is accomplished, with an humble confidence that the Master will say, "Well done, good and faithful servant," while you will gratefully exult in ascribing all to his own sovereign mercy in Jesus Christ.

But oh! my dear friend, whither is it that you are going? Where is it that you will be a few short weeks or days hence. I have affecting cause to think and to wonder concerning that unseen world; to desire, were it permitted to mortals, one glimpse of that mysterious economy, to ask innumerable questions to which there is no answer—what is the manner of existence,—of employment,—of society,—of remembrance,—of anticipation of all the surrounding revelations to our departed friends? How striking to think, that *she*, so long and so recently with me here, so beloved, but now so totally withdrawn and absent, that she experimentally knows all that I am in vain inquiring!

And a little while hence you, my friend, will be an object of the same solemn meditations and wandering inquiries. It is most striking to consider—to realize the idea—that *you*, to whom I am writing these lines, who continue yet among mortals, who are on this side of the awful and mysterious veil,—that you will be in the midst of these grand realities, beholding the marvellous manifestation, amazed and transported at your new and happy condition of existence, while your friends are feeling the pensiveness of your absolute and final absence, and thinking how, but just now, as it were, you were with them.

But we must ourselves follow you to see what it is that the emancipated spirits who have obtained their triumph over death and all evil through the blood of the Lamb, find awaiting them in that nobler and happier realm of the great Master's empire; and I hope that your removal will be to your other friends and to me a strong additional excitement, under the influence of the divine Spirit, to apply ourselves with more earnest zeal to the grand business of our high calling.

It is a delightful thing to be assured, on the authority of revelation, of the perfect consciousness, the intensely awakened faculties, and all the capacities and causes of felicity of the faithful in that mysterious, sepa-

rate state ; and on the same evidence, together with every other rational probability, to be confident of the reunion of those who have loved one another and their Lord on earth. How gloomy beyond all expression were a contrary anticipation ! My friend feels in this concluding day of his sojourn on earth the infinite value of that blessed faith which confides alone in the great Sacrifice for sin—the sole medium of pardon and reconciliation, and the ground of immortal hope ; this has always been to you the very vitality of the Christian religion ; and it is so—it is emphatically so—to me also.

I trust you will be mercifully supported,—the heart serene, and, if it may be, the bodily pain mitigated during the remaining hours, and the still sinking weakness of the mortal frame ; and I would wish for you also, and in compassion to the feelings of your attendant relatives, that you may be favored so far as to have a gentle dismission ; but as to this, you will humbly say, “Thy will be done.”

I know that I shall partake of your kindest wishes and remembrance in your prayers,—the few more prayers you have yet to offer before you go. When I may follow you, and, I earnestly hope, rejoin you in a far better world, must be left to a decision that cannot at the most be very remote ; for yesterday completed my sixty-third year. I deplore before God my not having lived more devotedly to the grand purpose ; and do fervently desire the aid of the good Spirit, to make whatever of my life may remain much more effectually true to that purpose than all the preceding.

But you, my friend, have accomplished your business—your Lord’s business on earth. Go, then, willing and delighted, at his call.

Here I conclude, with an affecting and solemn consciousness that I am speaking to you for the last time in this world. Adieu ! then, my ever dear and faithful friend. Adieu—for a while ! may I meet you ere long where we shall never more say farewell !

CLXXIX. TO THE REV. DR. CARPENTER.\*

*Stapleton, Oct. 14, 1833.*

DEAR SIR,—My memory is so very defective that I have no doubt your own, and that of each of the gentlemen of the party at Stapleton Grove, will have more faithfully retained many particulars of the conversation with that most interesting person, the Rajah Rammohunroy.

\* This letter is taken from the Appendix to Dr. Carpenter’s Discourse on the death of the rajah, where it is introduced in the following terms. “After I had decided to print the foregoing Discourse, I wrote the following note to the Rev. John Foster, whose religious sentiments I was well aware, would, in the estimation of many, give a superior sanction to his testimony ; and whose uprightness of mind, in connection with his well known acuteness of discernment, and the profound reflective character of his understanding would, I well knew, secure that testimony a ready recep-

I cannot recollect whether in replying, with promptitude and the utmost apparent frankness, to the respectful inquiries concerning his religious opinions, he expressed in so many exact words his "belief in the divine authority of Christ." But it was virtually such a declaration when he avowed, as he did unequivocally, his belief in the resurrection of Christ, and in the Christian miracles generally. At the same time he said that the *internal* evidence of Christianity had been the most decisive of his conviction. And he gave his opinion with some reasons for it, that the miracles are not the part of the Christian evidence the best adapted to the conviction of sceptics.

This led one of the gentlemen to observe, that surely the sceptics must admit, that if the miracles recorded were real facts, they must be irrefragable of the truth of what they were wrought to attest; and that in so serious an affair the sceptics are under a solemn obligation to examine faithfully the evidence that they were actually wrought, which if they did, they would find that evidence decisive.

The rajah instantly assented to this; but I thought I perceived by his manner that he had a slight surmise that the observation might possibly be meant to bear on *himself*, with some implication of a doubt, in consequence of what he had said of the inferior efficacy of the proof from miracles, whether *he* had an *entire* conviction of the reality of those recorded miracles: for he said very pointedly, that any argument on that subject was quite superfluous as to *him*, for that he did believe in their reality.

It was of sceptics generally that he spoke; but I thought it probable (from recollection of something in one of his writings), that he had

tion in the judgment of all who know how to appreciate him and his writings.

TO THE REV. JOHN FOSTER, STAPLETON.

*Great George Street, Oct. 12, 1833.*

DEAR SIR,—You cannot have forgotten the remarkable conversation at Stapleton Grove on the 11th ult., principally between Dr. Jerrard and the rajah, on the subject of the extent and reasons of the Christian belief of the latter. May I solicit your opinion as to the correctness of the following position—that the rajah's declarations at that time authorize the conviction that he believed in the divine authority of Christ, though he rested this belief on internal evidence; and that he believed in the resurrection of Christ?

May I further ask, if anything that passed elsewhere in your hearing threw any doubt into your mind whether he believed in the divine authority of Christ?

If you deem the position correct, and answer the inquiry in the negative, may I, *to that extent*, speak of you as among others at the conversation to which I refer? I am, &c.

LANT CARPENTER.

To this I received the following reply, which must set the question at rest. For the fulness of its statement, and for the permission to employ it, I feel greatly obliged to Mr. Foster, as will also many other friends of the rajah.—*Dr. Carpenter's Discourse* (Appendix F.), pp. 82, 83.

especially in his mind the *Hindoo* sceptics, whose imaginations have been so familiarized with the enormous prodigies of the Brahminical mythology, that, in spite of their rejecting them as monstrous fables, they retain an exaggeration of ideas, an incapacity of apprehending the true proportions of things, which will not allow them to see anything great and impressive in the far less prodigious wonders of the Jewish and Christian Scriptures : besides this their revolt from the belief of the fabulous miracles creates in them a tendency, unchecked by any due strength and discrimination and reason, to reject all others.

In the conversation with the rajah in a party who had the gratification of meeting him in a few days later, there was not any distinct reference to his religious opinions. It turned on the moral political state and prospects of India ; and on the elucidation, at great length, of certain dogmas of the Indian philosophers.

If these few sentences can be of the smallest use to you, in any statement you may have to make or maintain respecting the rajah's professions on the subject of religion, they are quite at your service for that purpose.

I am, &c.,

J. FOSTER.

CLXXX. TO MISS SHEPPARD.

Jan. 17, 1834.

MADAM,— . . . . While I must, and without the least affectation, attribute to the warmth of a youthful spirit, certain friendly excess in your estimate of what I have endeavored in the way of writing, I cannot but be gratified that it has been the means of imparting some pleasure and some improvement to such a mind. Nor can I be willing to entertain the ungracious anticipation (according to my own experience, in regard to some books and some kinds of writing), that at some future time, when the youthful feelings shall be somewhat cooled, when your judgment shall have become more rigorous, and your taste more fastidious, you will altogether revolt from the style of sentiment which has had your approbation in the juvenile season. At least, as far as relates to religion, I trust you will always be substantially in agreement with the principles and intention of those pages, whatever *color* of sentiment and cast of composition you may hereafter come to prefer.

Do you ever, now in your prime, look forward, through an extended course of years (which I hope is reserved for you on earth), to imagine what changes time may work in your feelings and tastes ?

Perhaps it is well an animated young person *cannot* do this successfully. But in the advance of life, and progress of intellectual and moral discipline, you will come to feel that you are on a somewhat different tract of existence ; that you are more apt to descry faults and make exceptions ; that you are more slow to make a favorable judgment ; that your approbation (I mean not of books merely, but of senti-

ments, language, characters, human beings, conduct, almost everything) is more limited, more cautious, less complacent; that many pleasing things have lost much of the brightness and attraction they had in the morning of life. This, in a measure, at least, is the inevitable experience of advancing life. It is unpleasing, it is grievous, that it should be so. But never mind, if the grand chief business of life go on well. If there be a maturation of judgment, a constant progress to a confirmed state of wisdom, excellence, and piety, we can afford to lose the vernal luxury of life, obtaining more, beyond comparison, than a compensation for the loss. And besides, religion has an invaluable power of *preserving* the animation of the soul, after the other sources of it become less copious, and some of them are dried up. An humble assurance of the divine favor, the consciousness of faithfully endeavoring to serve God, and the prospect into immortal life, for which that service is the preparation and introduction, will be a spring of vital, and sometimes vivid sentiment, when life has passed away from its youthful animation, or is declining into decay toward its conclusion.

Nevertheless I will congratulate my unknown friend on her youth, when the mind and the heart are in full activity, with all the fresh vigor of feeling; since I can assure myself she is resolved to secure the highest advantage of her life, by the best exercise and improvement of her faculties, and their consecration to the noblest purpose of existence.

I hardly know how I have been led into this kind of observations, but let me assure you, they are not meant as one of the grave, cold lectures, of age to youth. I wish you may, as long as possible, retain the delightful interest of that stage of life, and may have the least possible cause to regret it when it shall be past. Your kind and too flattering reference to the pleasure and advantage you have derived from my printed writings, claims from me all the cordial good wishes for your happiness in every respect,

With which I am, madam,

Very truly yours,

J. FOSTER.

---

CLXXXI. TO JOHN SHEPPARD, ESQ.

Jan. 23, 1834.

. . . . There seems to be, in the lingo of criticism, a certain factitious law or standard of poetry, by authority of which the critic (or would-be critic) shall take upon him to pronounce—"This is"—or "this is *not*, poetry"—often, most likely, not knowing exactly what he means. I wonder whether Lord Byron did, when he pronounced, as I have seen him quoted somewhere, that Cowper's writings were not poetry.

But whatever poetry may really be (and whether it be yet settled among them *what* it is, is more than I know), I can see no manner of reason why just and interesting thoughts, on any subject, but especially a serious and elevated one, should not be given out in verse, if the writer be adequately master of that mode of constructing language. And if the structure be smooth and easy to read, and the diction be perspicuous,

natural, and uncontorted, the majority of readers would prefer to have an imaginative subject in a poetic form. Simplicity, naturalness of diction, is a grand merit, utterly forfeited by many of our aspirants, both in verse and prose, while aiming at *effect*, as they call it, by artificial trickery, or by a stately, stilted march of language. An artificial style of composition can please only when it has the exquisite grace and finish, and clear-pointed thought of Pope, or the power and dignity of Milton. One does not forget Johnson's observation, that *Cato's Soliloquy* is an instance to prove, that the most solemn and elevated thought may be, in the most impressive manner, conveyed in language of the utmost simplicity.

. . . . It does always appear to me very unaccountable (among, indeed, so many other inexplicable things), that the state of the soul, after death, should be so completely veiled from our serious inquisitiveness. That in some sense it is proper that it should be so, needs not be said. But is not the sense in which it is so, the *same* sense in which it is proper there should be *punitive* circumstances, privations, and inflictions, in this our sinful state? For one knows not how to believe, that *some* revelation of that next stage of our existence would not be more influential to a right procedure in this first, than such an *absolute unknown*. It is true, that a profound darkness, which we know we are destined ere long to enter, and soon to find ourselves in an amazing light, is a striking object of contemplation. But the mind still, again and again, falls back from it, disappointed and uninstructed, for want of some defined forms of reality, to seize, retain, and permanently occupy it. In default of revelation, we have to frame our conjectures on some principle of analogy which is itself *arbitrary*, and without any means of bringing it to the test of reason.

. . . . It is a subject profoundly interesting to myself; my own advance into the evening of life is enough to make it so; and then the recent events! You have your own special remembrances, though, as to several of the objects, going to a considerable time back. I have one most interesting *recent* object; and there are—were—*Hall, Anderson, Hughes*; where, and what are they now? at this very instant how existing, how employed? . . . . I have but just room for kind remembrances to the yet living. . . . The rapid passing away of life! In looking back last week, into one of my early letters, to her who has left me, I found that it is exactly *thirty years* since I became acquainted with you and them. I am still, my dear sir,

Yours, most cordially,

J. FOSTER.

---

CLXXXII. TO THE REV. DR. LEIFCHILD.

March 15, 1834.

. . . . I passed some time with him [Mr. Hughes] in the Academy, ending 1791, 1792. We both had all the spirit of youth, and were very



confidentially intimate. But I then went away to various distances, and did not see him for some years, nor exchange with him but the fewest letters. I hardly know how this happened, but I was led into widely different associations, though hardly into any equally intimate friendship. I subsequently passed some months at Battersea, chiefly in his house; but since that period have rarely seen him, and that only in short snatches of time, which occurred in his Bible Society journeys. Nor was our correspondence more frequent than those brief interviews. All this time, nevertheless, we maintained (I can answer for myself, and I think for him also) a fixed sincere regard for each other, not altered by time or absence. It may be necessary to add, that though invincibly amiable to each other, we differed on various points, and good-humoredly rated each other upon them when we met. This did not at all unsettle the firmly established mutual esteem, whatever it might do with the *complacency* of an occasional short season of intercourse. But I shall convey a wrong impression, if anything I have suggested should seem to say that the friendship between us was *slight*. It was firm, cordial, unalterable, in spite of personal non-intercourse and slight shades of difference.

He had great mental activity, quickness of apprehension, and discriminate perception. He had considerable ambition of intellectual superiority, but less I think for any purpose of ostentation than for the pleasure of mental liberty and power. He was apt, like other young men, to be somewhat dazzled by the magniloquent style in writing; but at the same time always justly appreciated plain, strong, good sense, whether in books, sermons, or conversation. A defect of simplicity and obvious *directness* in his own writing and preaching, was, I think, not a little owing to his admiration at the time in question (and I suppose an earlier one) of certain writers of the eloquent class whose style was somewhat stilted—too artificial and rhetorical. His preaching, as a young man, was often very animated, rather unmethodical and diffuse, and extremely rapid; in this last respect in perfect contrast to his pulpit exercises towards the close of life. His temperament was what is called mercurial; lively, hasty, earnest, versatile, and variable. He was kind and candid, yielding the sympathies of friendship, warm in its feelings, and prompt in its appropriate offices; free from acrimonious and resentful feelings, and from those minor perversities of temper or whim, which, without being regarded as great faults, are very annoying in social life. There is nothing I retain a stronger impression of, than the proofs he habitually manifested of a sincere and firmly established piety, which so attempered his youthful vivacity as to restrain it in its gayest indulgences and sallies from degenerating into an irreligious or in any other way offensive levity. I can remember that in hours when we gave the greatest social indulgence to our youthful spirits, he would fall on serious observations and reflections, in the unforced and easy manner which indicated the prevalence of serious interest in his mind. The hold which the great and vital principles of religion had upon him was

not slackened by his indecision, his incompleteness of theological system, respecting secondary points of doctrine. His public discourses were too little in obvious and studied conformity to any established model to be acceptable to a considerable portion of his hearers. In addition, his voice would sometimes, independently of his will and almost of his consciousness, take and retain through the whole service a pitch above its natural tone, necessarily causing an unpleasant monotony, which had a disadvantageous effect, as it always must, for attraction and impression. But I think that he was oftener in possession of his natural voice. . . .

---

CLXXXIII. TO THE EDITOR OF THE MORNING CHRONICLE.

[The Established Church and the Voluntary Principle.]

October 2, 1834.

SIR,—As a quiet observer of the agitation of the public mind on the subject of the established church, and in respect especially to the predicted consequences of its supposed downfall, I hear and see a confident utterance of notions and prognostications which cause me some degree of wonder, and no small degree of perplexity. By the downfall of the establishment, I mean not anything so undefined as that for which some of the dissenters have petitioned, and which a certain small portion of the clergy are understood to desire; without having precisely explained, or perhaps even distinctly conceived, the intended import of their phrase, "Separation of the Church and State;" but plainly a discontinuance, a dissolution of the church as a national institution, by an abrogation of all peculiar privileges of the clergy, and a transfer of the temporal property of the church to the general service of the nation; thus leaving the whole weight of the public ministration of religion to subside and rest upon what has come to be denominated the voluntary principle.

I am given to understand (that is, if I can or could) that such an event would involve an extinction, nearly, of the knowledge and observance of Christianity, followed by the prevalence of an atheistical recklessness and moral barbarism: only somewhat qualified, but not rendered much less noxious, by a blending in some portions of the community a wild fanaticism. Assertions or assumptions to this effect have been repeatedly made in parliament, in speeches elsewhere, and in journals of extensive circulation and influence. These are, it is true, the vaticinations of the ultra class of seers; but many of the advocates of the establishment are holding a language not very far short of this, in proclaiming the disastrous consequences that would follow on its fall.

In requesting admission for a few sentences of inquisitive comment on this representation, I will decline any reference to the fact so often alleged in argument by the opponents of ecclesiastical establishments, that the Christian religion originally made its way extensively in the world, not only without the patronage of the secular authorities, but in defiance of

their enmity and power. Nor will I insist on the question, whether it be consistent with piety and reason to suppose that the divine Author of Christianity should suffer that one thing, which is transcendently the best on earth, and the object of his peculiar care, to depend for its effective existence on arrangements in the political constitution of a nation; insomuch that, though it have taken deep root in the land, it may be subject to wither to death under an enactment to withdraw from it a certain portion of secular privilege and emolument. Passing by such general considerations, let us see what may be, in this country at this time, the probabilities in favor of religion, supposing it to fall off from its formal junction with the state.

And first, I should like to know, from the foretellers of such fearful consequences of the supposed event, what is their real deliberate estimate, in respect to religion in the community, of the dissenters and their operations. In a survey of the country there are brought in our view several thousand places of public worship, raised at their expense, many of them large, many of the smaller ones under the process, at any given time, of being enlarged, with the addition of many new ones every year. And I believe a majority of them are attended by congregations which may be described as numerous, in proportion to their dimensions and the population of the neighborhood. So that if the dissenters be somewhat too sanguine in assuming that their numbers would already be found, on a census of the whole country, fully equal to the attendants of the churches of the establishment (in most of the great towns they far exceed), there is every probability that their rapid augmentation will very soon bring them to an equality. The Wesleyan Methodists are included; since the church must, in common sense, forego any pretension to claim them—till they will submit their chapels to episcopal consecration, with its consequences—till they deem episcopal ordination indispensable, in substitution for the hierarchical fiat of their conference, to qualify their preachers—and surrender their whole independent system to be extinguished under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction.

With respect to the ministers of these several thousand congregations, I do not hear from any quarter a denial that in general they are zealous and diligent in their vocation—in very many instances eminently so. Even the charges so often made against them of fanaticism, enthusiasm, restless proselytizing, bold intrusion, and the like, convey an acknowledgment that they are not lazy in their work. If to the number, combined with the average length of their weekly public services, be added the consideration that nearly the whole is at the expense of their own mental exertion, it will appear that in the proportion of public exercise they very greatly exceed the generality of the established clergy. And, if I may believe testimony on all hands, in addition to a rather extensive observation, what is it that in substance they press on the attention of the people, under all the diversities of manner, and inequalities or defects of talent and attainment, but the infinite importance of

their spiritual and eternal concerns ; with an inculcation of those principles of faith and practice which are indispensable to their final safety ? thus aiming at what I suppose to be the object of the institution of a Christian ministry.

Notwithstanding their dissent from the church, and their sectarian differences among themselves, I believe it is beyond all dispute that a very great majority of them maintain a much nearer conformity in doctrine to the articles of the established church, excepting the minor, ceremonial, and merely ecclesiastical points, than the majority of its own clergy. I am authorized, also, to assert, with perfect confidence, that there is very rarely in their public ministrations any hostile allusion to the establishment, or anything said in praise, or even in vindication, of dissent.

In the economy of protestant dissent there is one distinctive fact of high importance, and so nearly universal that the exception must be very small—the requirement of *personal religion* as essential in the qualifications of a minister ; I mean that he be habitually and seriously intent on the cultivation of piety in his own mind, with a view to his own last account—his own final safety. In so very numerous a class it is inevitable that there will be admitted some false pretenders, and that there will occur too many lapses of human frailty in such as are *not* hypocrites. But these examples when exposed are branded with a peculiar opprobrium, for the very reason that personal piety is in them an avowed and perfectly understood *sine qua non*. They must afford satisfactory cause for the people's *believing* them to be such. I need not ask you whether there be any existing ecclesiastical institution in which evidence of such a qualification is not held indispensable, is not even brought under question, as a requisite to official competence for the consecrated profession.

Not to lengthen this statement till I incur the suspicion of being a partisan, I will but just mention the great, I may soberly say the prodigious, exertions of the dissenters in the promotion of education among the poor—in local plans of charitable visitation and instruction—and in wider and very costly schemes and combinations for the extension of religion both at home and in foreign regions. And is it, or is it not, the genuine Christian religion that they are thus multiplying and extending their activity to promote ? Any assertion or doubt set up against the affirmative by the supporters of the church, provided they really believe its authorized doctrines, must fall before the fact, which I re-assert on the most extensive evidence, that by far the greater proportion of the dissenting ministers insist earnestly on what will on all hands be acknowledged the most essential and distinctive in the theology of that church's articles, understood in their plain, unsophisticated sense, which they admit, while the more numerous proportion of the clergy evade them.

If, further, it should be alleged against those preachers, that many of

they are grossly defective in mental cultivation—that, from a deficient education, their preaching, even though it were right in point of doctrine, is illiterate, crude, and vulgar, I suspect this opinion is taken up on a very limited and unfortunately directed observation; and, at any rate, the dissenters in general are, as I am informed, completely aware of the indispensable necessity of a sound, intellectual, and literary discipline to qualify their ministers, and support numerous seminaries for that purpose.

And now, sir, I come to the point in view. Seeing that the dissenters perform already so very large a proportion of whatever is done for religion among the people, I ask, in honest simplicity, looking only thus far, how there should be so overwhelming a ruination to the cause of Christianity in the supposed event of the fall of the establishment? Is it in mere and temporary competition with the church, and not from any sincere concern for religion itself, or the welfare of the people, that they are prosecuting all these operations, at so immense a cost of labor and pecuniary expense; so that, on condition the church became silent, they would gladly save their toil and money, and surrender the people to ultra paganism—paganism without a God? Instead of remitting their exertions, would they not feel themselves called upon, if possible, to double them? Would any one of their meeting-houses be shut up; or would not, instead, new ones be raised, in hitherto unoccupied districts, with a rapidity even surpassing that which has, of late years, excited the surprise of every one in the habit of extensively traversing the country? Would their congregations forthwith dwindle, as under a pestiferous blast; or would they not rather receive a great accession of attendants, even though it were in virtue solely of that principle or instinct in the human mind, that *something* of the nature of religion is indispensable? And as to the religious and moral *effect* of all this on the people, I confess, that with every wish to be impartial, I cannot but see the influence of the dissenting ministry on those who attend it, is, on the average, at least, as beneficial as that of the church on its division of attendants.

According, however, to some of our augurs, it is not in prostration and silence that religion would perish on the dissolution of the church; for that event, they tell us, would let loose, like Æolus with his winds, a wild fanaticism, to result in a boundless confusion of all manner of fantastic notions and conflicting sects. But does any sober man believe that the Establishment is actually, at present, of any avail to restrain such lawless elements? over the dissenters it evidently can have no such power; *they* may, for anything it can do, abuse their freedom into as many sectarian follies as they please; not the most petty heresiarch among them ever thinks of asking its leave. If its articles contribute anything to keep them right, it is merely on the strength of their supposed intrinsic scriptural authority, which would remain just where it is, though the ecclesiastical institution were abolished; and, let me ask,

what power of restraining to an uniformity of doctrine is maintained over even its own members by a church which is suffering within itself an almost mortal schism, in an utter contrariety of opinion on the most important of its doctrines, between the larger portion of its clergy, and that smaller, but increasing one, which is growing so much in favor with the people; not to mention those recent wildest extravagances and novelties of which the church has had a much greater share than all the dissenting sects together.

Thus far, sir, I find no way out of that "perplexity" which I began by confessing to you. But this is only half my difficulty. I now turn from the dissenters directly to the church itself, in the inquiry after the consequences of its supposed downfall; still meaning by that term its reduction to the equal ground with the other religious parties, of maintaining its ministry by the voluntary support of those who approve it. That event being supposed, what am I to expect would follow? Would the clergy, thereupon, all in a body renounce their vocation; would they, with one consent, refuse to preach? Would they, in word and act, declare that, since the Christian religion is no longer established and endowed as a part of the national constitution, they care nothing about it; and that, as to the people, they are not worth preaching to? Should we see one church, and another, and another, shut up in solitary gloom; and hear the passing townsman, or villager, or rustic, saying, "Dr. — (or Mr. —), has told us he has no more to say to us; we may go to what he calls the conventicle, if we like, or, if we like it better, to the ale-house; and the parson is off—we don't know whither?" Am I seriously required to believe the clergy so indifferent to the sacred calling to which they have been "moved by the Holy Ghost," and to the welfare of their flocks? No, it will perhaps be replied, they would be willing and most desirous to continue their ministrations, but how could they be supported when the income was gone? They could not preach and starve. Now I must confess my amazement at hearing such language. Do they ever take one minute's trouble to think how so numerous a dissenting ministry can subsist, in communities who have besides, the expense of building, enlarging, and keeping in repair their places of worship, with all the additional of schools, &c., &c.? Or have they ever heard of such a thing as the Catholic priesthood of Ireland? The adherents of the church possess the far greater share of the wealth of the nation; they affirm, that they are the vastly preponderant body in every way; they profess a zealous and affectionate attachment to the venerable institution for its *spiritual* excellence; and they have on their side the main strength of the hereditary prejudices of the people. What then are we really to understand, that, in spite of all this, a voluntary support of their clergy is a desperate thing to be calculated on or thought of? Is it, when the truth is known, come to this, that the supporters and adherents of the church do not, after all, care enough about religion, or for the Christian services of their clergy, to maintain a Christian ministry

in the same manner as the dissenters are doing? Is that an example of pious liberality and zeal far above their imitation? What! come to them for money in support of their religion, and there's an end of it! Sacred in their eyes as is their church, more sacred still are their coffers and their purses! But then is it not extremely remarkable, that the dissenting cause should have found out, and drawn to itself, extracted, as it were, from the community, just that portion of it which *does* care enough about the matter, which is willing to be at the expense of a Christian ministry; leaving the rest under the imputation, the just imputation, on the above supposition, as far as I, in my simplicity, can see, of setting a lower value on their souls, or, at least, on the means of their instruction and salvation?

I have heard it alleged, that however it might fare with the people in the towns and the districts, thickly inhabited, the rural tracts, with a scanty population, would be left in a total destitution of religious advantages. Did the foretellers of this consequence ever traverse any considerable part of Wales, where they would see an almost endless succession of meeting-houses, in tracts where a few humble-looking habitations, scattered over a wide neighborhood, give immediate evidence of a thin population and the absence of wealth? And, if I am not much misinformed, such proofs of the productive activity of the "dissenting interest," as it is called, have begun to appear in scores, or rather hundreds, of the thinly-inhabited districts of England? a representation confirmed by the frequent complaints of clergymen in such localities, that their parishes are becoming deformed by such spectacles—"nuisances," in the language of some of them; "schism-shops" is the denomination I have oftenest heard. The means for raising these edifices have been contributed by the liberality of dissenting communities at a distance, for the most part, from the places themselves. And, according to my information, the religious services, in many of them, are kept up gratuitously, in consideration of the poverty of the rural attendants, by the extra labors of ministers in the nearest situations, assisted by zealous and intelligent religious laymen, possessing and cultivating a faculty for public speaking.

Now, after such statements, can I hear without mightily marvelling, that on supposition that the church, as an endowed establishment, were to fall, the whole resources of its present immense community, the combination and co-operation of all their opulence, education, and religious zeal—their myriad of accomplished clergymen's (not a few of them, by-the-bye, men of independent property) ascendancy in many ways over the minds of the people—and their possession of all the churches, clear of that incumbrance of debt, which I am told lies heavy on many of the dissenting meeting-houses; that all this together would still leave the church party in hopeless inability and despondence of supporting a Christian ministry in the poorer districts, to save the people from barbarism, practical atheism, or the fanaticism which they think would be nearly as bad?

In my next letter I shall suggest a few considerations, more especially applicable to that party in the church denominated evangelical.

---

## CLXXXIV. TO THE EDITOR OF THE MORNING CHRONICLE.

[The Evangelical Clergy.]

Oct. 3, 1834.

SIR—In my former letter, the bearing of my observations was directed to the church party generally and collectively considered, as all concurring in the solemn protest against the supposed change; and I have but slightly noticed a certain distinction and division within that body; the distinction marked by the appropriation to a portion of its clergy and other members of the epithet *evangelical*, by assumption on the one side, and derisive concession on the other. The number of the clergy so designated I have seen estimated, I think, in some of the publications in their interest, at as many as one-seventh or one-eighth of the whole. They are for the most part, I am informed, quite as zealous as any of the others for upholding the establishment, and affected with equal horror at the idea or the omens of its fall. I hope to be pardoned for directing the argument, before I conclude, specially and respectfully to them.

If such a thing could happen as my being in a company of them, on terms that would admit of a reference to the subject without discourtesy, I can imagine myself addressing them to some such effect as the following:—Very greatly, gentlemen, honoring your piety, sincerity, and diligence, I yet do not assume to be theologian enough to pronounce on the difference of religious faith which marks you off in such prominence and insulation from the great majority of your clerical brethren; but, allowing that you may be in the right, I have then to suggest a consideration or two, somewhat *ad hominem*, respecting your anxiety and alarm for the permanence of the establishment. You say, and I would believe you, that your great concern, for yourselves and the people to whom you minister, is *religion itself*, as an affair between the soul and God, consisting in the knowledge and efficacy of divine truth; that, as to any ecclesiastical institutions, framed and established by the government of a nation, you value them no otherwise, and no further, than as they are adapted to promote among the people that grand interest, by a pure faithful ministration of religious truth; and that, therefore, your attachment to the existing establishment is from a deliberate conviction that it is in some way or other so adapted. You will, I doubt not, allow me to add for you, that any such institution which, on a great scale, and during a long tract of time, practically fails of operating effectually to this its great and only purpose, must bring its adaptedness deeply in doubt. Either its constitution must be unsound, or its administration most unfortunate. And if the vice which appears in the administration be but the natural result of the constitution, then the whole contrivance falls under a fatal



conviction. Nobody has to learn that every institution, however excellent in theory, is liable, from human folly and depravity, to perversions in its administration. But if the practical working of an institution be generally, predominantly, through successive ages and all the change of times and circumstances, renegade from the primary intention, this would seem to betray that there must be, in the very construction itself essentially, a strong propensity and aptitude to corruption; that a good design has been committed to the action of a wrong machinery for making it effective; that the instrument intended for the use of a good spirit, is found commodiously fitted to the hand of a darker agent.

I am not, you will observe, expressing any opinion on the abstract question of the necessity or possible advantage of a religious establishment, but commenting on the actual church establishment of this country. Now, then, I would say to you, with deference, take an impartial view of the English church, through a duration of nearly two centuries, and at the present time. You well know that, with all its amplitude of powers and means—its many thousands of consecrated teachers, of all degrees—its occupancy of the whole country—its prescriptive hold on the people's veneration—its learning, its emoluments, and its intimate connection with all that was powerful in the state—it did, through successive generations, leave the bulk of the population, for whose spiritual benefit it was appointed, in the profoundest ignorance of what you consider as the only genuine Christianity.

But this is greatly understating the case: for it not only did not teach what you so consider; it taught, and effectually taught, in spite of its creed on paper, what you esteem to be *not* genuine Christianity; what you regard, if I can at all understand the strain of your preaching, as fatal error. Why did it so, if it really *was* adapted to do just the contrary? And this it did in undisturbed continuance, under the sanction of the combined secular and ecclesiastical authority, in whose judgment it did not by all this forfeit its claims. It was held to be a good and inviolable institution, the best model of a Christian church notwithstanding.

Such was, for incomparably the greater part, its administration. Now since all this while it possessed no intrinsic power in its constitution to redeem itself from being thus made an instrument of fatal mischief, you will pardon me for doubting whether that constitution itself was not corrupt.

You gladly retreat from this point of review; and take your stand on the present state of the church, in which you say that a better spirit is at last arising; and therefore you would regard its supposed fall as a dreadful calamity, involving little less than ruin to the cause of religion in the land. By this better spirit, I must understand you to mean, that many ministers like yourselves are appearing in the church, who inculcate religion in that form which has fixed on you and them, for praise and opprobrium, the distinctive epithet *evangelical*. I believe you all

insist on the vast importance of exhibiting religion in that form ; declaring the doctrines so distinguished to be of the very essence and vitality of Christianity ; inasmuch that the contradiction or suppression of them radically vitiates a minister's religious teaching. But now let me remind you what a small minority, notwithstanding all the recent accessions, you form of the ministers of the church ; and seriously ask you what you can deliberately think of the principle and tendency of an institution under the appointment and sanction of which, perhaps six-sevenths or more of the religious instructors are, as in your judgment they must be, misleading the people in respect to infinitely the most momentous of their concerns. Are you never, in your pulpits, when solemnly enforcing the evangelical principles, intruded upon by the image of the many thousands of congregations listening, at that very hour, to doctrines virtually or avowedly opposite to your's, in churches which they attend in the undoubting confidence that the religious ministration in an institution sanctioned by venerable antiquity, and all the authority of the realm, must be right ? On retiring, you have to strike the balance between the good and evil effected on the self-same Sunday by the institution which you extol.

You will not accuse me of exaggerating the opposition and alienation under which you stand for your religion's sake, when you think of the various, numberless, and often bitter manifestations of antipathy on the part of the majority : how you are declaimed against as enthusiasts, inflating some of your hearers with spiritual pride, turning others of them gloomy and sometimes mad ; how you are described as a mischievous sect within the church, and betraying it ; and what controversial labors of the clerical pen there have been to explode your tenets and pretensions. And all this, in spite of your earnest, reiterated declarations of devoted fidelity to the church ; declarations sedulously endeavored to be verified in many instances, as I am told, by a careful avoidance of communication with dissenters, who hold and preach the very doctrines for which you are thus spurned and defamed by your own brethren.

Now, such being the disposition of the far greater part of the church, with regard to what you esteem as exclusively the evangelical and saving faith, what are those consequences which you anticipate with such dismay, on the supposition of its fall ? In the first place, as to yourselves, the evangelical party, would you thereupon cease to preach ? Surely, it may be assumed that instead of abandoning your vocation, you would become even still more zealously intent on prosecuting its grand object ; and you would have a much enlarged scope and freedom, by the breaking away of canonical restrictions : but how to be supported ? I may answer that you say, or it is said by your friends, that your congregations are generally speaking more numerous, more pious, and more personally attached, than in the other portions of the church. Would all their warm feeling shrink into niggardliness ? would they betray that, after all, they are only worshippers of mammon, as soon as there came upon

them the duty of contributing to a liberal provision for their valued spiritual instructors? Is this your estimate of their piety and affection—and that, too, while you see what is done under so many disadvantages by the dissenters? Besides, many individuals among you are persons of independent means; and there is no small portion of wealth in that division of the community which separates off from the main body of the church in preference for your ministrations. Will you pardon me if I add, that if the event in question should reduce some of you to a less genteel station and style of life, I do not see why that should be deemed an insupportable affliction, or how it should destroy and neutralise the value of your Christian labors? Probably none of you prosecute those labors with happier effect than some of those who are far enough below a competence for maintaining that style.

In the next place, what are you prepared to say respecting that much greater proportion of persons in the sacred profession, whom you pronounce, both expressly and virtually, to be no true ministers of the gospel, therefore no safe guides of the people to salvation? In so pronouncing, you say they ought never to have been in the profession. But is it not a strange dilemma that for this most valid reason they ought never to have been in it, and that yet it would be a religious calamity for them to be out of it?

There is no doubt, that when the clerical office should cease to be an endowed profession, great numbers would speedily relinquish it, partly from the withdrawal of the former support and emolument, which in very many cases the congregations would not feel esteem enough to replace by voluntary supplies; partly from the indifference or positive dislike which many of them are known to feel to the religious employment. And you will ask me what is then to become of the spiritual interests of the people? I may answer by pressing home my question—*whatever* become of them, is it for *you* to maintain that it would be a religious calamity for the essentially defective, for the fatally erroneous teachers of Christianity to vacate the pastoral function? You need no description of multitudes of those who have taken it on them; mere men of the world, who have entered the church just as a profession, in the most secular sense of the term, as more convenient or accessible than any other; under no solemn commanding sense of the importance of religion for their own selves, maintaining only a professional decorum of character, and too many of them hardly even that, content with a cold official performance of “duty;” assuring the people of final safety on slender and delusive conditions; many of them little addicted to sacred studies; and some of them, of more intellectual habits, exhibiting the result of their application to theological subjects in a systematic opposition to the doctrines in assertion of which you are constantly citing the holy Scriptures, and the articles of your church—according to which latter standard at any rate you are certainly in the right.

But I am told that you resort from the pressure of such untoward facts to the evangelical temperament of the *prayers*, which are to impart the genuine sentiments of religion in default or in spite of the sermons. *Have they this salutary efficacy?* If you have been much conversant in those parts of the country (dark regions, you denominate them) where the evangelical doctrines have never been brought through the means of preaching, in the church or by the dissenters, I am, from various experience, certain you must have found that the Prayer-book has failed to reflect one glimmer of those doctrines, as you understand them, on the minds of the people. I remember that inveterate devotee to the church, Hannah More, acknowledging the fact to be notorious, and expressing her wonder at it. Did you ever know even one instance of a thoughtless irreligious man, or a mere formalist, being awakened, converted (I use your own terms) by means of the bare instrumentality of the prayers?

If you are appalled at the sight of the wide chasm thus supposed or threatened to be made, I am not accountable to answer the question how it is to be filled up. The answer may be fairly required from the consistency of those whose theological principles call aloud for this infraction, while their ecclesiastical ones are as vociferous for the inviolability of an institution which would to be sure instantly go to pieces under such an operation.

If however it will be a consolation, you may be assured there never will be any such sudden downfall of the church, and simultaneous flight or destitution of its ministers. If the dissenters, advancing in the ratio of recent times, shall have risen after a number of years to such a preponderating majority, and the collective nation shall have declined so far from its veneration for the establishment, that the representative legislature, seeing its preservation no longer valuable on political grounds, shall doom it to extinction, even then there would be assigned to the actually occupying clergy an equitable allowance of support during their lives or their necessities. And thus the established ministry will be prolonged, whether for better or for worse; while their continual diminution in the course of nature will gradually bring the people universally to take on themselves the maintenance of whatever belongs to their religion.

But you, even you, with all your sorrow that the establishment is fatally treacherous to its momentous trust, are still more zealous for its permanence, in the professed hope that the church, which should all this while have been converting the people, may at length be itself converted. Strange idea, methinks! that the institution appointed as the grand rector of the people's judgments on the most important of all subjects, their guardian against error and all evil principles, should be waiting to be itself rectified by the action of extrinsic causes; that is to say, causes which having independently of it, and even under its opposition, accomplished a great work which it ought to have effected, shall rectify it in addition. The church shall in time become purely, faithfully, efficaciously

evangelical. In what time, and by what means ? Obviously, when the divers and strongly-combined authorities which exercise the ascendancy over it shall have first become so. When the heavenly fire shall have descended on the high places of the land—when courts, and statesmen, and the chief ecclesiastical dignitaries, and universities, and titled patrons, and opulent proprietors, and traders in advowsons—when these shall become very generally the spiritual, humble disciples of the school of Christ, then at length the church will attain its evangelical purity. This will, indeed, be coming to its duty rather of the latest. In the comparatively smooth service it will then have on its hands (for the people, too, cannot have remained far behind in such a change), it may calmly rejoice to see already performed, by some extraneous agency, the mighty operation for the achievement of which its own powers and privileges had been conferred ; and truly munificent must the nation be, to reward it by a confirmation of those privileges for what it has not done, and has not to do.

But you may say that, as you are promising yourselves a *progressive* evangelization of these authorities ascendant over the religious character of the church, you may fairly calculate on a *contemporary* and at least equal progress in the renovation of the church itself, with a consequent efficacy in corresponding proportion. Be it so ; but what will you be thinking all the while of the contrary and counteracting effect of the spiritually dead condition (your own phrase) of the *un-evangelized* portion of the church, which will for a long time, at all events, retain you in the hapless condition of the captives of Mezentius ? As to any rapid progress in the hoped for change in the disposition of the chief patronage, it would seem to me that you have little cause to be so sanguine. What, for example, have you to expect from the superior personages in the state, even such of them as are supposed to be not altogether ignorant or careless of religion ? I remember when some of you looked with considerable hope and confidence to that very respectable premier and churchman, the late Lord Liverpool. When, however, after a period of delay and expectation, a representation was conveyed to him by Mr. Wilberforce, complaining that the evangelical clergy were neglected in the dispensation of patronage, he replied that it was on principle that the patronage was so withheld, for that he considered the evangelical party to be doing great mischief in the community.

That you do, notwithstanding all the adverse influences, obtain here and there the introduction of an evangelical minister, in succession to one who was perhaps violently in opposition, may well be very gratifying to you. And indeed this gratification has often so strong an expression, as to afford a significant indication of your own estimate of the state of the church. For it seems to be regarded almost as a God-send, that, under such auspices, there should have come unto, or come forth in, the church, yet one more such minister as you say all the thousands of them ought to be.

On such a survey of the ecclesiastical system, I hope you will pardon an old observer for presuming to dissuade you of the evangelical party from joining chorus in the language which profanely affects to identify the fate of Christianity with the stability or fall of an institution which, by your own declaration, unites the Manichæan principles—but without their equality.

Mr. Editor, I am more ashamed than I can express, to have encroached on your page to so unconscionable a length; and faithfully promise never to obtrude the subject on you again.

Your's, &c.,

A QUIET LOOKER-ON.\*

CLXXXIV. TO THE REV. THOMAS COLES.

*Stapleton, Dec. 22, 1834.*

. . . . From time to time we have heard, with sincere sympathy, of the increasing debility and sufferings of her who now suffers no more. It was painful but to think of what was endured by the victim of the long progress and continual aggravation of such a disease, which the affectionate and deeply interested attendants feel themselves unable to arrest or materially to alleviate. In such a case, it is distressing for them to feel that the doomed object must suffer, must inevitably *bear it all*, whatever be their willingness, if that were possible, to lighten the pressure by bearing themselves a share of it. How distinct and separate, how *solitary* in this sense is the individual who might say, "I am very grateful for all your sympathy and assiduous kind offices, but still it is I alone that am to feel my strength diminishing, to struggle with suffocation, and to go through the aggravating malady to the last conflict." Nevertheless it is a consolation to the survivors, when an amiable sufferer, like your daughter, has had all the alleviations which can be given by vigilant affection, combined with domestic accommodation and medical aid, so

\* "Who told you of '*my* two letters?'—meaning, I suppose, in the Morning Chronicle. *Whoever* wrote them, I approve them enough to be pleased that you also approve them. The writer would, I dare say, be curious to see by what wriggles the '*evangelicals*' would get out of the corner—out of the cleft-stick. But how strange, that instead of such wriggling, hardly a man of them of any account has the honesty to come manfully out of the corrupt institution. With one or two exceptions, all who *have* of late years come out have left anything they were ever worth behind them."—*Mr. Foster to the Rev. Josiah Hill, Nov. 1, 1834.*

"Some one naming himself '*Philaethes*,' has written in the Morning Chronicle against the thing, and threatens another column or two. I have no disposition to say anything to him. He is one of those who have no notion of the business as a matter of *religion—religion by and for itself*; and he makes, as coolly as possible, some monstrous false assumptions of fact, in favor of the [Established Church],—assumptions which prove that there is no talking to him to any purpose."—*Mr. Foster to B. Stokes, Esq., Oct. 28, 1834.*

different from the melancholy condition of many, who languish into death in poverty and every kind of destitution.

It would also have been consolatory, no doubt, to have received some more distinct expression of a cheering view into the future scene, in the near approach to the entrance into it. But I trust that no gloomy sentiment will, on this account, rest on your mind. The divine mercy may well be confided in, much beyond the extent of the specific decided indications displayed by those who are the objects of it. I would not doubt, that in the silent thoughts and emotions of your child that mercy was desired, and that it has been found. The reluctance to leave this life is in a young person, to whom it has been pleasing in possession and flattering in prospect, very compatible with a state of mind which is safe for leaving it. A high satisfaction, or animated pleasure, in the prospect of death, is probably granted but to very greatly the minority of such young persons, who yet leave us no ground for distrust that to them it is a happy change.

---

CLXXXVI. TO THE REV. JOHN FAWCETT.

*Stapleton, Feb. 16, 1835.*

MY DEAR OLD FRIEND,—I need not say again, that I am always interested by what you tell me of yourself and domestic associates, and of the neighborhood; partly because, as to the *latter* I am a stranger, and as to the former (yourself and Mrs. F.), I do *not* feel myself a stranger. You two have remained in my memory and regard *as the same*, while, as to the neighborhood, the inhabitants that I knew are almost all swept away; and, I am told, that almost the very face of the country is changed. Some descriptions to this effect were given me by Mr. Jackson, whom I saw at Bath a few days since. He told me how Hebden-Bridge is grown into a town; how certain gloomy and romantic *glens*, the scenes of my solitary wanderings, some forty or more years since, are cleared of their forest-shades, opened into thoroughfares, and occupied with cotton-mills—and he added—meeting-houses. How strangely would the sight of this break up my ancient associations! and with a feeling of the uncomplacent kind; though, as to one of the intrusive novelties—meeting-houses—I certainly ought to regard them as a good exchange for the ancient resorts of owls and foxes. By the help of Mr. J. I endeavored at a combination of the modern with the ancient geography. But, indeed, in simply recovering the ancient there were difficulties, such as D'Anville had probably to encounter in his verifications of places in the ancient world. In some instances I remembered places of which I had lost the names. In others there were names remaining in my memory disconnected from the places. . . . I am never so unpatriotic as to *depreciate* my native locality. I have always and everywhere constantly asserted, that I have seen *very* few places more remarkable, in the quality denominated *picturesque*, than that district. Its bold and varied features

will remain in my imagination as long as I live. And they have not been the less cherished there for that wild and *moor-land* gloom, which, on some sides, invades and bounds them. The circumstance has always been congenial with my habits of feeling. A gloomy and solitary tendency belonged, I suppose, to my nativity.

If I were with you, it would be very interesting to go into a long and patient comparison of our parallel series of feelings, impressions, notions, habits: though I confess it would be a very imperfect and faded recollection that I could make of my own. You and our friend Mr. Greaves, are the only coevals from youth, with whom this social and comparative retrospect could have a strong and sympathetic interest. *Hughes* was the one other individual. And with him the social comparison would, in a great degree, have been under the same predicament in one respect—that the intimate personal association was much the greatest in the early part of life. For more than *thirty* years past I have but very rarely and briefly seen him—slight snatches of time, when his Bible Society traverses brought him in my way, at intervals of one, two, or even three years; and communications by letter were hardly more frequent. I am gratified by what you allow me to believe of your own and my old friend Mrs. Fawcett's health. Do you both fairly and fully take to it that you are *old* people? I can now and then, in particular circumstances, detect myself in a certain sort of reluctance to recognize that fact as to myself. I dare not assert, that the most musical notes that I could hear would be—"Old Foster,"—a designation which, though I may not happen to hear it, I dare say slides into the colloquial speech of those who have a reference to me, notwithstanding there being no younger male branch of my family to make such epithet necessary for distinction. But any feeling I ever have of this kind brings with it, sensibly and invariably, a sentiment of self-reproach, in the admonition that a conscious, full, decided, satisfactory preparation for another life and a higher state of existence, would associate a pleasing sentiment with everything that would remind me how near, comparatively at all events, I am approaching to the momentous and mysterious translation. And I do earnestly implore the heavenly grace, which alone can *render* that preparation decided and satisfactory. The retrospect of my long life is deeply humiliating, whether judged of absolutely, or by comparison with individuals, who have gone from indefatigable Christian service to their glorious reward. In this view it is not without a profoundly mortifying emotion, that I can repeat the name of Dr. CAREY, unquestionably the very foremost name of our times in the *whole Christian world*. What an entrance his has been into that other world! . . . .



## CLXXXVII. TO THE EDITOR OF THE MORNING CHRONICLE.

[The Ballot—No. I.]

April 24, 1835.

SIR,—In reporting from day to day the progress of the late election, your columns abounded with descriptions and indignant complaints, from all quarters, of the iniquitous management on the part of the anti-popular interest, perverting the suffrage by every expedient of corruption and intimidation; so that your correspondents had to inform you from a hundred places, that it was absolutely impossible to obtain an honest election. One of them from a large city, told you—"The Reform Bill is not worth five farthings here, so inveterate, despotic an ascendancy has the tory corporation, combined with the high-church, acquired over the interests and fears of the inhabitants." You have subsequently, when recounting the causes of the reduction of the reformers in the new parliament, as compared with the preceding, adverted to this wide and flagrant system of iniquity; and affirmed, I believe with truth, that the same bad practices were chargeable in but a small proportion on the reform candidates and their supporters. But I expected you to do something more than this. I reckoned on your taking an occasion to declare, in explicit and emphatic terms, that to whatever extent the nefarious system has been successful in sending members to parliament, to that extent the representation has been falsified, the nation defrauded, and the legislature vitiated. In that proportion the House of Commons is the reverse of what it ostensibly purports to be, and what it ought to be—a real representation of the people. And the corrupt section is not only morally invalid, but criminal: the members who have entered by this dishonorable road, not only have no right to the position they have assumed, but deserve (or their agents deserve) some penal visitation for the proceeding to which they owe their success. Yet, somehow it happens, that when once they have got within the door, and are sworn and seated, they seem to have slipped off the badge of disgrace which clung to them up to the moment before their entrance; they have signed with the holy water at stepping in, and are become all at once "honorable men." Their right to be there seems to be admitted upon the fact itself that they *are* there. They maintain the same assurance of front, of speech-making, and of voting, as if they were *bonâ fide* representatives; just as you have sometimes known a man, who has by fraudulent means obtained possession of a property not his own, carry himself nevertheless with the confident air of an honest man. The party, and the leaders of the party, to which these members addict themselves, know very well how their allies were obtained. But what of that? Their votes tell for as much as if the most genuine suffrages of the constituency had sent them to the house; and a minister who is willing to rule by such means (Sir R. Peel for example), would only laugh at you for telling him he has no *moral* right to that part of his support; that in so far the approbation given him is a

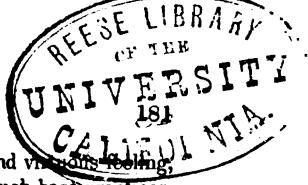
lie against the community, and that he is availing himself of a flagrant iniquity. It would be deemed a violation of all propriety for a bold, independent member, facing the ranks where these worthies are in array, to declare aloud, before or after a division, that several dozens or scores of those honorable gentlemen ought to be struck out of the vote, or even out of the house, on account of the criminal means by which they had entered it—so much does success always extenuate the opprobrium of any turpitude in the manner of obtaining it.

And now, sir, consider what a prodigious, and possibly disastrous effect, such a falsified representation of the country may have on its affairs. Questions of an incalculable importance—we might suppose a question of peace or war, or a competition between opposite systems of policy—might be decided, and decided perniciously to the country, by the preponderance given by the votes of those whom nothing but the infamous practices at elections had qualified to vote at all. Or great questions of national interest, which a genuine representation of the people would have decided speedily and conclusively, may be retained or forced back into such a balance of power as to threaten a long continuance of commotion, alternation, and confused or frustrated legislation.

Recollecting the vile means to which the reports in your Journal, during the late election, ascribed in so many instances the success of the anti-reform candidates, I am sure it is your opinion, even after the utmost allowance by way of set-off should be made for all offences of the same kind committed on the reforming side, that an honest election would have carried into the house such an overpowering majority of reformers as would have sent the tory ministry once for all to their proper places, instead of that bare and fluctuating majority which they can brave from the strong fortification of office; or with which, even if they were dislodged, they can maintain powerful, long, and baffling fight, backed by an augmented force and pertinacity in the quarters hitherto obstinate against reform. But now, sir, does it remain yet a question at this time of day, what is the true theory of popular representation, according to any doctrine of our so lauded constitution, and according to the intention of the Reform Bill? Am I allowed to assume it as the theory and intention, that the national constituency shall freely and honestly vote according to their judgment of measures and men; that, instructed, reasoned with, pleaded with, as much as you please, they shall yet be determined in their choice by nothing but their deliberate approbation; and that everything to the contrary of this is, so far, treason against the national polity? If so, this most important function ought be guarded with every possible security for its faithful exercise. And I need not ask you whether the present condition of the exercise of what is pretended to be conferred as a right and a privilege, imposing a most serious duty, be not a flagrant mockery. With the venal it is a privileged occasion of having their country to sell; with the dependent, it is a badge of slavery; with those who are conscientious as well as dependent, it is a painful trial of prin-

ciple; all which abuses reached their last excess in the recent election, and are now to have their result in the legislature. If this vast and multifarious mass of evil be inseparable from the representative system, it is time to lower the tone of our boasting about our liberal institutions—our government by enlightened opinion—the independent spirit of Englishmen, and all that. Especially we should get sober from our inebriated exultation over our parliamentary reform.

How little did you, or any of us, anticipate in our triumph at having accomplished, by the reform bill, a final overthrow, as we fancied, of the party who had so long reigned and profited by corruption, that within two years we should have the rank, unmixed essence of that party, as embodied in the fiercest opponents of reform, again in command of the state, and supported by one-half, within a trifle, of the so-called House of Commons; a proportion so close upon an equality of numbers, that if the tories had been willing to disburse a very small addition of money to the million they are computed to have expended, or had given a few ounces harder pressure to the compulsion on the unprotected voters, they would have had the formal advantage of a majority in the House. You deny, with small exception, that this is from any re-action in the opinions of the national constituency. Then, what a wretched system—what an utterly fallacious mode of requiring a declaration of the public sentiment, you must acknowledge the present thing called election to be; and most formidable must be the evils involved in a remedial expedient that would substantially avail for a true expression of that sentiment, if they would be anything near as great as having the expression of it so widely and deeply falsified. You will surmise that the expedient I have in view is no other than the Ballot. And what other has any man suggested, with even an appearance of plausibility? Those who are not against it unconditionally and at all events, are saying, Let us first try everything else. What is it that they have to try? Laws against bribery have notoriously been a dead letter. If an instance or two of conviction occur (as recently at Cambridge), it takes us by surprise, as a thing we could not have reckoned on. In cases where everybody knew that bribery had pervaded every street of a town, with a pollution as gross as the stream in its kennels, it has been found impossible to produce that sort of precise and technical proof demanded by legal men, and by members of parliamentary committees, some of them, perchance, having reasons of their own for being punctilious in the admission of evidence. And what mode of jurisdiction can you contrive to take cognizance of intimidation, practised by landlords, employers, wealthy customers, clergymen, parish officers, the heads of public offices, and corporation magnates—intimidation often conveyed through hints and innuendoes, perfectly intelligible to those who dare not misunderstand them, but so slightly expressed that they would seem to vanish into nothing when attempted to be made the foundation of a criminal charge? Let us wait in the hope (something to this effect was lately said by Lord



John Russell) of the growth of a more honorable and virtuous feeling, by which influential men will become ashamed of such base practices. But how are you to send them back to pass through a new school of morals? And tell me, if you can, of any incipient symptom of such a change. Which of them is at all ashamed of the recent exploits in this line? Is any one of them the worse received in the rank of society to which he belongs? Are not their performances, if they had been successful, a subject of complacent and jocular reference in their select coteries. It is there a good joke how they drove their cattle to—the hustings, while some of the radical creatures were internally grumbling, or even giving vent to their chagrin in impotent mutterings. And who is to teach and exhort them to turn from their bad courses? Will not many of their spiritual instructors (if accounts be true) have cause to be very lenient in their reprehensions? Even Lord John Russell himself was evidently very sceptical as to any such progress to honor and honesty; and, pressed by the evidence that, instead of an abatement, there is an aggravation of the evil, acknowledged that we may at last be driven to the ballot. As no other expedient in a tangible form is proposed from any quarter, we are left to the alternative of resorting to this, or of surrendering the grand palladium, as it has been called, of our popular rights and liberties to a malignant agency, which essentially vitiates, and will not cease to vitiate, our legislature and legislation. Yes, this is the alternative, we are brought to the plain question whether we be, as the constitutional doctrine pretends, or be not, to have an actual faithful representation? If this be not an idle theoretical fancy, but a practical thing, to which we have a right that ought to be maintained, we must maintain it by the means by which alone we *can* maintain it. As being our sole resource, the expedient is necessarily the right one, whatever evils of its own it may involve. You deny the right itself, if you deny the right of using the only effectual means for our possession of it. You treat us with the ludicrous and spiteful absurdity of first appointing an institution for the public welfare—essential, all-important, you proclaim, for good government—and then telling us that, nevertheless, the only means for making it effectual are worse than leaving it to be frustrated. It is a capitably contrived machine, only it cannot be worked so as to effect its purpose without the application of an implement that will make it scatter mischief all around it. But better send it to the lumber-room at once, if it cannot effect the good it is intended for without a balance, or over-balance, of damage from the only mode of working by which it can effect that good. Why continue working it in a manner which, while it causes much greater damage another way, does not but very partially effect the intended good? We do not deny that evils of very considerable amount would attend the ballot, especially in the earlier stages of the practice, but if we account them such that we must reject it though we have no other way of obtaining an approximation to the faithful action of the representative principle, we plainly say that we

forego that pretended essential requisite to good government, and submit to be misrepresented, to a great and pernicious extent, in the legislature. And so we must sit down in helpless resignation, till the stars shall be more auspicious ; till unprincipled wealth and arrogance shall spontaneously cease to bribe and threaten ; or our universal constituency shall rise to such a pitch of virtue and courage as to reject the offered purchase-money, and defy at every hazard the menaced revenge. A goodly prospect, and a *short interval* for the exercise of our patience under a perverted legislation !—a legislation which may, meanwhile, create for posterity also abundant occasion for the exercise of *their* patience, in addition to that load of debt which preceding parliaments, convened under a mere sham of representation, have entailed on us and them.

I am, &c.

AN INDEPENDENT ELECTOR.

CLXXXVIII. TO THE EDITOR OF THE CHRONICLE.

[The Ballot. No. II.]

*April 25, 1835.*

IN advertng to the evils incident to the ballot, and in a degree inseparable from it till it should have worked into decided practice and power, I must lay the chief stress on those of a *moral* nature. The anti-reformers lecture on these in a strain of conscientious horror ; but they may be suspected to have far other, and in their view stronger, objections to secret voting. With them the greatest evil is the very thing which we are anxious to obtain as the greatest good—the conveyance into parliament of the genuine national opinion and will. In opposing the motion for the ballot, so ably and eloquently brought forward by Mr. Grote in 1833, Sir Robert Peel honestly avowed his grand objection to be, that the ballot “ would give a much more democratic House of Commons, which he thought quite needless ;” a declaration that the electors, in the present manner of voting, are far from the free exercise of their pretended privilege ; that the ballot would be a remedy for that wrong ; and that, as far as depended on him, that wrong should be perpetuated. In this declaration he stood forth a genuine representative in one capacity, whatever he were in another ; he expressed the mind of the anti-reformers ; for they to a man have voted, and will again vote, against the ballot, on the very same principle. He, therefore, is but an equivocal reformer, who declaims against the detestable system by which they vitiate the popular suffrage and representation ; and, at the same time, joins them in denouncing the expedient by which he has their own confession that the system would be substantially abolished.

The moral evils correctly alleged against the ballot, fall chiefly within a comprehensive sense of the term falsehood. To importunate or imperative candidates, or canvassers, would be given many promises not intended to be performed ; under protection of secrecy they would be

violated; on subsequent inquisition or accusation there would be unscrupulous affirmations that they had been kept: there would be maintained before, and during, and after, the season of election, a system of distrust, concealment, duplicity, equivocation, injurious to the moral principle and habit, and repressive of the frank intercourse of society. The arraignment is eagerly exaggerated; but it is true to the extent of forming a serious charge; and it is easily made to appear fatal against the ballot, in an argument that takes no further account of moral considerations than barely and exclusively as implicated with that practice. In listening to debates on the subject, it has struck me as very curious, that opposers of this mode of election on moral grounds, reason and declaim as if they had to deal with an insulated topic, altogether independent of relative and comparative considerations. Prove the ballot to be liable to these grave objections and we must look no further—there is an end of the matter; as if an election were one of those affairs which, if a certain proposed mode of transacting them be exceptionable, need not and will not be transacted at all; or as if, when it is a thing that must and will take place, a knowledge of the manner in which it will be transacted, if the one proposed be rejected, had nothing to do with the question whether it ought to be rejected. They really talk as if no such thing were known as a necessity of choosing between two evils, with an obligation to put them in the balance, and choose the less. They say, in effect, that we look at one side, taken separately; and if there be much belonging to it that we cannot approve, we are to determine for the other at all hazards, whatever may be the evils involved in it.

Let the ballot, on the one side, stand obnoxious to the serious exceptions which I have enumerated, and then let us see what we have on the other. There is a direct violation of both justice and law, in applying the resources of wealth and power to pervert the national suffrage, and so to frustrate the whole end of the institution. A general venality is indefatigably promoted, and promoted by the classes who are under special obligations to be the patrons of virtue, but whom the persons tempted and corrupted by them are gratified thus to find no better than themselves; and who thus forfeit all moral influence of station over those below them, by whom it is shrewdly presumed, that those who will purchase others will, if they find a good market, sell themselves. Hundreds of thousands are suborned by what they know it to be wrong for them to take, and for their superiors to give. All sentiments of public virtue are rooted out, and a great public interest sunk into the traffic of the basest selfishness. The corruption powerfully operates to sap *all* moral principle in their minds; especially under the aggravating circumstance, that this bribery, vicious in itself, often leads to a direct plunge into other vices, the revels of intemperance and every disorder. It leads also to the falsehood and prevarication which are alleged against the ballot, as if *that* alone could be the guilty cause of such vices. For, will not the receivers of bribes conceal and deny, in any society but that of kindred

baseness, that they have sold their votes ; at least such of them as have some decency of character to maintain among their neighbors ? especially when close upon the dubious termination of a hard-run contest, prices have risen very high, will the receiver of the value of a horse, or two or three cows, be disposed to tell how he came by the money ? Will he not, if challenged, invent a story of any other source rather than own the true one ? I dare say the decently reputed elector who lately, in one of our boroughs, near the last critical moment, was strongly suspected of receiving more than 200*l.* for his vote, given contrary to his positive promise, which was claimed by the opposite candidate, will have taken especial care, and expended a good per-centage of lies on his pounds, to avoid the proof.

There is the cheaper, the prouder, the still more effective iniquity, of compulsion by intimidation. Of this part of the subject it is impossible to make a more condensed, or vigorous, or revolting exhibition, than that in Mr. Grote's eloquent printed speech, which every member, who expects to vote on the next motion for the ballot, would do well to read and ponder. During the warfare, which ended in carrying the Reform Bill, many of the aristocracy, while vexed at losing the rotten boroughs, might possibly have had some presentiment, never suspected by our simplicity, of a partial and very considerable compensation, in a way which, though less suited to their convenience, would be more gratifying to their pride. They, perhaps, calculated that the enlarged constituency, instead of creating an independent power to defy them, would but supply them, in many instances, with so many more subjects to command ; at the same time that it would abate the former opprobrium of monopoly, by a plausible appearance of a much more popular election than when they, or their nominees, were sent up by two or three dozen of what were called voters. And the recent election has shown that this, if they made it, was no miscalculation.

But look at the odious spectacle, think of the national infamy, of perhaps more than a quarter of a million of men, invested with what they are told to consider as an honorable privilege, admonished that it lays on them a most serious duty, appointed and recognized as the exponents of the opinion and will of the vast community, summoned and appealed to for the expression of its mind, arrayed as in a mighty guardianship of its interests—think of so immense a portion of the men standing in this capacity and under this responsibility, being placed in the alternative of either violating the obligation, and doing a wrong to their country, or incurring such immediate, direct, private injury, as will infallibly be felt as too much to suffer for a public duty. Think of the arrogance that plainly and insolently threatens, or the signified will of the power which needs but to hint, the frustration of a man's industry, the loss of his business and subsistence, the turning out of his situation, the expulsion from his house or his farm ; or, in the humble grade, the deprivation of aid from philanthropic institutions, unless he will do what the tyrannic au-

thority is committing a villainous wrong in exacting, on the pain of such a consequence. Imagine the suppressed, or confidentially uttered resentments, "the curses, not loud, but deep," among one portion of the bondmen; and the conscious self-degradation, mingled with the indignant feelings against the oppressor, in the virtuous portion; many a one of whom has, for a while, maintained a resolution to do his duty at whatever cost, but has looked once more at his family—and yielded. For let it be especially remembered, that the severity of the wrong is aggravated just in proportion to the good principle, the conscientiousness of those on whom it is inflicted. And it gives a strange idea of a privilege, that it should be a grievance in proportion as the possessor would make conscience of his manner of using it. An excellent notion, too, of an institution expressly designed for the defence of popular liberty, that it should be skilfully adapted to be seized upon for the benefit of aristocratic tyranny; at the same time a fine encouragement to public and all other virtue, that while the honest man finds himself exposed to punishment for maintaining his integrity, he should see that certain of his neighbors are rewarded for not troubling themselves with any such incumbrance.

The result of all this is, what I have so much insisted on before, that the popular branch of the legislature is not a genuine representation of the people: and either the insulting theoretic figment that it is so, should be honestly flung away, or a mode of election should be adopted that will approach to a realization of that professed intention.

Now, sir, you have to place this aggravated and complicated mass of evil on the one side, and over against it whatever vicious properties or accidents are attributable to the ballot. And in default of any effectual middle expedient, what have you to do? It would be no better than a travesty of morality for you to say, "There needs no deliberation; there are bad things inseparable from the ballot; I shall give my sanction to them by adopting it; but I must on no terms sanction what is bad; I must, therefore, reject it absolutely, be the consequence what it may"—when the consequence may be, that you choose what involves a much greater proportion of evil; which, therefore, you sanction, under this very affectation of scrupulous moral principle. At the least, you decidedly give your sanction to all that proportion of immorality by which the part you choose exceeds that which you reject.

And now, as to the comparative proportions. I confess I am at a loss to understand, how an unprejudiced, well-principled observer can look at all the abominations of the present mode of election—the school for the discipline of venality, periodically opened all over the land, in the form of a market, for the sale of men's frail integrity, under a knavish management of all manner of deceit and subterfuge, and amidst the temptations to coarser vice—another sort of contemporary agency, violating law, and right, and all the worthier feelings of humanity; crushing the independence of inferiors; turning their nominal privilege into a practical conviction that they are slaves; compelling them, on pain of great, and



even ruinous injury, to sacrifice the judgment and conscience which it has been inculcated upon them to exercise and obey ; forcing them to give, in practice, the lie to their opinion ; perpetuating all practicable revenge against such resolutely conscientious, but dependent men, as do their duty in despite of menaces, which they know will be executed—and the upshot of all this in a spurious legislature : I say, I cannot understand how any upright, plain-judging man, can think this vast compost of iniquity, a less amount of evil than the temporary concealment or dissimulation, the breaking of extorted promises, and the prevarication to be resorted to for eluding tyranny and revenge, which are the delinquencies alleged, and partly with truth, to be incident to the ballot.

Far be it from me to make a light account of these delinquencies, by which integrity is so seriously damaged. I may allow that they are great evils with perfect safety to the argument that they are rather to be incurred than the greater ones on the other side. But still, there is unquestionably to be admitted a very material qualification of the moral estimate of them, from the consideration that they are modes of dishonesty practised for the very purpose, as the accusation itself acknowledges, of maintaining honesty in the discharge of the electoral duty, consistently with impunity in so performing it. The persons resorting to these expedients are in the situation of a man who is about going with money to pay his debts, and is beset by a villainous extortioner, or a robber on the highway ; and the sternest moralist would not refuse to acknowledge a great palliation of the turpitude of an insincere promise or a false declaration, made to elude these personages in order that his money might go to its right use. And if one of these exactors should afterwards chance to discover that he had thus been *defrauded*, what would you think of his exclaiming, with a virtuous indignation, against the falsehood, the immorality, of the man who had by such means disappointed his wicked attempt ? And what should I think of you, if you joined him in this righteous indignation,—saying, that though, to be sure, it was not quite the thing that he should have made the attempt on the man's property, yet it was extremely criminal in the man to protect himself against the plunderer by such means ?

But I cannot help noticing here what a strange leaning to the side of power (one of the worst and most general of our ill propensities), I have observed in the reasoning of the opposers of the ballot, on the moral ground that it would facilitate and protect the breach of promises. They constantly give the benefit of their casuistry to the oppressor's side. If the dependent voter, shrinking at threatened injury, shall have given a promise contrary to his judgment and conscience, his obligation, according to these moralists, is from that moment perfectly simple and unequivocal. No matter that his fears have brought him into a dilemma between, on the one side the obligation of his promise, and on the other the prior inalienable duty which he owes at once to his country and to himself, for the faithful exercise of his electoral function. His obligation

is all on the left hand; he is solemnly bound, in allegiance to the tyrant, to fulfil a promise yielded under the hard stress of self-preservation, and to give his paramount obligation to the winds. Else he is lectured with the most imposing gravity on the crime of violating promises; while his oppressor incurs only the tolerant censure of having somewhat overstrained one of the advantages of his higher situation. And lest he should be deprived, through secret voting, of the benefit of such lightly censurable injustice, the dependent voter shall be left absolutely at his mercy. So sure are we, moralists and all, to find the least to blame on the stronger side!

"But why will the electors *let* themselves be coerced?" In the manful oratory of those who can talk at their ease we hear it said—let the electors show themselves worthy of the privilege conferred on them; let them with one consent vindicate their right with a noble resolution, and then, &c., &c. Why, yes; *then*, the supposed consequences would follow. But if the discussion, instead of a vain speculation on what would take place *if* things were—as they are not, be an inquiry for something that should avail for the desired object in the actual state of things, it is answer enough to this brave suggestion to say, that no such thing can be; that it is idle to talk of men who are dependent in numberless ways, setting up a general defiance of the dictates and menaces of a most powerful aristocracy, determined, as there is no want of examples to warn those who wish they could dare to be refractory, that such a crime will certainly not go unpunished. But I must observe in addition, that it is wrong for men to be placed in a condition to require heroic virtue for the honest performance of a common duty of citizenship. That must be a badly adjusted institution which practically tells a man, that his integrity in such a thing as voting for a member of parliament, in a state, too, which is boasting of its political freedom, shall be at much of the same cost as fidelity to his religion might have been in times of intolerance and persecution. I am, &c.,

AN INDEPENDENT ELECTOR.

---

CLXXXIX. TO THE EDITOR OF THE MORNING CHRONICLE.

[The Ballot.—No. III.]

April 27, 1835.

SIR,—The epithet "un-English" has not yet quite dropped out of the phraseology of the opposers of the ballot. It is foolish cant. What! it is foreign to the English character, is it, for a man who is industriously and anxiously prosecuting some humble occupation, or for a middle tradesman, to be dismayed at the threat of well-armed power to blast his success, destroy his resources, do all that such power can do to reduce him to penury or bankruptcy? It is "un-English," is it, for a man in some subordinate office to be reluctant to resign his salary, his only support, knowing how indifferent a chance the eager competition for

situations allows him for obtaining another; or for a small farmer to shrink at the prospect of being ordered off from the dwelling and acres where he is tolerably supporting his family, and has perhaps been at the expense of improvements in the convenience and cultivation?

Some of the opposers are asserting that, notwithstanding all the protection that the ballot might seem to afford, the efforts at coercion would still be continued, by hinted threats, inquisitorial harassings, and revenge at hazard on suspected and presumed disobedience. Suppose this admitted to be true, the argument will then be, that since the odious tyranny will do all it can to harass the dependent electors, in spite of their protection, we are to leave them exposed to its whole unmitigated power, by refusing them even a partial defence; since they would be liable to be tracked and annoyed amidst their coverts, give their enemy the advantage of fairly running them down in the open field.

But after all, and whatever might for a while be attempted or inflicted by unprincipled power, nobody doubts that substantially it would be defeated. There would be a strong determination on the part of the heretofore enslaved citizens, to verify their new privilege. And the arrogant and imperative classes, finding that the elections did and would, through the combined resolution and evasion of the electors, render their threatenings impotent, and the extorted promises worthless, would abandon in despair a mode of interference which obtained them no success adequate as a compensation for the odium; an odium which would be aggravated by any attempted perseverance of injustice, following up the former violation of the freedom of the electors with a determination to break through the specific provision given them for security against it.

Bribery, however, I have heard it asserted, would still be largely practised. If so, men must set a lower value on their money in this sort of traffic than in any other. In what other bargain will they part with it under an uncertainty whether they shall obtain *any* of the stipulated equivalent, and a certainty that in many instances they will be defrauded, and without remedy? The case is, too, that it would be the mutual consciousness of rogue dealing with rogue; the receiver of the bribe scorning to admit any sense of obligation to be honest to the payer. He will receive it with the ill-suppressed look which would say, You are a rascal, you are making me one, but yours shall be the forfeit. The self-taxing corruptor must have a strong fancy for adding the decoration of folly to his baseness, since he would know that the bribe taken from him will be an excellent sedative to the principle, and hint to the cupidity, of the elector, for making a similar profit of the dishonor of the opposite candidate; after which he will go and vote just as he pleases; perhaps cajoling any remainder left him of conscience with the consideration, that he has at any rate performed *one* of his promises.

As to an objection that has been made against the ballot as giving an "irresponsible power" to the voters, I believe nobody really feels it of the smallest force. It is not worth while to go into any question of ab-

abstract principle. Look at the practical state of the case. The allegation has been explained to refer chiefly to a responsibility in which the electors stand, or ought to stand, to the large body of the population below them; and means, if it have any definable meaning, that they would be taken, by the privilege of secret voting, out of the proper sympathy with that inferior portion of the community, and might be indifferent or unjust to its interests in their choice of representatives. Now, under this pretended solicitude about justice to the opinion, will, and interests of the lower order of the people, what is the real ground on which every high aristocrat, every tory, in parliament will vote against the ballot? Commend me again, for that, to Sir Robert Peel's honest avowal, expressive of the sentiment of all the class, that the grand objection against the ballot is, that "it would give a much more democratic House of Commons;" that is, a house more, and far too much, partaking of the feelings, and partial to the interests of the common people. And it requires a patience more than philosophic to hear this pretended concern for preventing the escape of the voters from their responsibility of justice and good-will to the lower orders, when the whole pleading goes plainly to subject them under a slavish and pernicious responsibility to the upper classes. Lest they should be disposed or tempted to fail in their duty of being guardians of the rights, and considerate to the wishes, of the unprivileged multitude, they shall stand in full exposure to be bribed or overawed to confirm, by their votes, that imperious oligarchic domination which they hold the elective franchise under a responsibility to those below them for resisting in their defence. But if I have mistaken the quarter to which the argument points, and if the meaning be, after all, that the power of the electors should not be "irresponsible" to those above them, I have only to observe, that a power which you hold, subject to an arbitrary power above you, that can dictate how you shall use it, is very much like no power at all. You would not do amiss to divest yourself at once of the honor and the trouble.

I observe that something is to be attempted, or at least proposed in parliament, towards the prevention of this monstrous iniquity. Have you any faith in the efficacy of the expedients for either prevention or punishment? How many corrupted voters, or corrupting purveyors of votes, will tender evidence of bribery? Or how obtain witnesses to a clandestine proceeding in which themselves had no share? How can the multifarious and elusive modes of bribery be reduced to any exact definition? And as to intimidation, how will the elector who had not courage to disobey, for fear of punishment to himself, find courage to be prominently active towards the punishment of the tyrant? And how, if he should, will you secure his subsequent impunity against revenge, which will come on him in such ways as no legal provision can obviate? His landlord, suppose, is convicted and punished on his evidence. This will be an excellent security against the prompt exercise of his landlord's indisputable right to turn him out of his house or farm! How

much of course is it, also, that the man of wealth will continue his custom to the man of trade who has been the cause of his paying a heavy fine, or has ineffectually attempted to do him that favor!

It has been said that the guilt in question is not so much chargeable on candidates as on vile underling agents. But how many of the honorable gentlemen have peremptorily interdicted to their agents all such practices; or conveyed beforehand (in imitation of some of the liberals) a positive assurance to the constituency that no man should suffer any harm from them for the freedom of his vote; or declared they absolved the voters from any promises they might have been induced to make contrary to their judgment? And which of them, afterwards made aware, or strongly suspecting, that their election has been gained by such means, will be forward to promote the investigation and the justice? What vile agent, whose activity brought the deciding votes in one of the late contests, would find himself and his offered services spurned with abhorrence by the same candidate next time?

I should somewhere in this paper have observed, that the ballot would go far to rid our elections of the abominable nuisance of outrage, bullying, fighting, smashing of windows, and the other flagrant breaches of the peace, by which a most important public transaction is so often turned into a scene of infamous barbarism. When the adherents of the opposed interest come to the place of election merely as so many individuals, presenting no ostensible shape of marshalled parties, there would be nothing tangible enough to excite the tumultuary violence. Would not this alone be a benefit to set off against more than half of whatever can be alleged against the ballot? And it would obviate the disgust which the more sober, and the contempt which the more refined, portion of the community are apt to conceive for the whole character of democracy; I may add, the aversion with which persons coming from foreign communities must witness the "working," as we name it, of our popular institutions. One has often imagined with shame what would be thought by any of the subjects of the more tolerant foreign despotisms, who might come to see the methods for constituting a legislature in our famous land of liberty.

I am gratified to perceive that a conviction of the necessity of the ballot is fast gaining ground: and that, at all events, the infamous management of elections will be forced on public and legislative attention. What is it that thus forces it into discussion, but the notoriety and unprecedented extent of the infamous management in the recent general election? And to this very cause it is mainly owing that the tory party have regained the vantage ground where we have been doomed to see them once more.

Lest you should suspect that I have been stimulated to trouble you with the above cursory observations by some grievances experienced by myself, I beg, sir, to assure you that I am a perfectly

INDEPENDENT ELECTOR.

CXC. TO MRS. HANNAH MORE.\*

*Stapleton, near Bristol.*

DEAR MADAM,—I should never have thought of such a thing as requesting your acceptance of a new copy of an old and common book, on account of the piece prefixed to this edition of it, had not Mr. Cottle told me, that such a liberty had been taken by the writers of some of the essays accompanying the late reprints at Glasgow, of a number of other old books.

I am aware that the vast accumulation on your premises, of the productions of contemporary book-makers, must have suggested to you the idea of the comfortable provision you will have, of materials for lighting your fires, in case of any scarcity of chips or shavings. But on the supposition that you will order them to be taken for that use in the *order of time*, that is, of *their dates*, I may venture to calculate on a considerable term of exemption for this volume; and may even hope for it an extension of that term by way of special favor, on account of so minor a part of it being the work of any other than the excellent Doddridge.

If I could be confident on reckoning on any decay of memory in such a veteran, I should not be doing wisely in taking this opportunity of recalling to your recollection, by confessing my sins against, I must not say courtesy, but even all civility, propriety and decorum; in having received, in former years, presents of copies of several of your own valuable works, without returning so much as a line of acknowledgment. I wish I could find any better extenuation than to say, that in each instance I really did feel grateful, and very greatly flattered; that I intended writing soon to say so; that a sad habit of procrastinating all things, deferred it till I became ashamed to write at all; and that then I said to myself in excuse, Mrs. More is necessarily quite certain, without being told it, that I, with every intelligent reader of her works, hold them and their author in high respect and admiration, and will be sure that I value as I ought, these personal tokens of her friendly remembrance.

There occurred one circumstance, now many years past, which would have seemed to render it indispensable on *my own* account, however otherwise superfluous to you, to convey to you some brief, but strong expression, of my high and invariable respect, if I had not become informed, that a suspicion, excited in your mind against me, had been obviated; I am referring to what you may have probably dismissed from your memory—the appearance of an unaccountably captious article in the *Eclectic Review*. No one could be more surprised and displeased at that article than myself; and I am confident, that from no quarter did the editor receive a more speedy and indignant reprehension.

In common with all the true friends of religion and the improvement

\* This letter was, by an oversight, not inserted in its proper place in the series. It was written in 1825 or the following year, and therefore belongs to Chap. VI.

of the age, I am gratified to think to what an extraordinary length the sovereign Disposer of our allotment on earth has protracted your life and eminent usefulness. It is very pleasing to hear, that you have experienced a considerable alleviation of infirmity and illness. Deeply grateful as you must be, for having been appointed so long to prosecute with success, so important an employment, you will wait, with calm acquiescence and cheerful anticipation, the hour when the great Master shall call his servant to his presence and her eternal reward. I am, dear madam,

With the highest respect and regard,  
Your friend and servant,

J. FOSTER.

---

CXCI. TO THE REV. JOSIAH HILL.

May 21, 1835.

I HAVE to confess, I am far too much your fellow-sinner in the matter of being too much occupied with politics ; and I feel somewhat of the bad effect which you complain of. At the same time, as the affairs of the nation and the world, at this period, *are* prodigiously important to the interests (and not *exclusively* the temporal ones) of a very large portion of mankind, one makes out for one's self a *partial* justification. The point is, how and where to adjust the limitation that ought to be imposed by higher interests, while one looks at the momentous crisis for good or evil, at which the course of time, and we may say of Providence, has now arrived. But these newspapers—these newspapers! to think how nearly they constitute my whole reading! I am mortified at it, and want to see and *resolve* how to mend. At any rate, I am not sorry for the non-appearance here of that "*Watchman*." There was evidently a very competent ability ; but I was disgusted with the spirit, the servility, the time-serving, the practical disavowal, if not expressly in words, of the principles, but for the assertion of which, by *nobler spirits*, Methodism itself would never have enjoyed such immunity and privilege. The last number you sent, having dilated with high complacency on the complete establishment in power of Sir R. Peel, and the gradual subsidence into impotence and insignificance of the factious opposition to him, I *was* a little curious to see what would be said *just about ten or twelve days after*, of the fall of the idol, on whose "honored brow" (that was the phrase) the national approbation and the crown of enduring power had descended and planted themselves. But, of course, it would be described as one of the "awful and inscrutable dispensations of Providence," inscrutable except as vindictive, it being methodistically certain, that in no other way than as a national judgment for our sins, Providence would permit the recovered ascendancy of a party who are intent on abating the pestilent nuisance of the Irish church.

CXIII. TO H. HORSFALL, ESQ.

June 27, 1835.

MY DEAR OLD FRIEND,— . . . . What should this letter say ? What should it be an answer to ? What should be taken for granted in it ? I may well ask myself such questions, since I have under my hand a letter from you, dated—*exactly eleven years back*.

. . . . But to think of the long tract of years since our last personal communication ! That was at a time when we might, with tolerable propriety, be called *young* men ; whereas now, I dare say, I am denominated among my acquaintance, “old Foster ;” and I was particularly struck with Mr. Hamilton’s expression—“Old Mr. Horsfall !” “*Old !*” I thought that sound very strange ; my image of him is that of a *young man*. But I soon recollected myself, and thought, what should he be else (and, at the same time, what should *I* be else ?) since between thirty and forty years have intervened between the present time and the time on which my memory is resting ? There was the additional consideration, that in your case there is a *younger* man of the same name. I have no son to require or suggest that note of distinction. He that might have been the cause of such a distinction, has been nine years in the grave.

What changes in the world, in our native place, in ourselves, since the time we were familiarly associated ! I wonder in what manner and degree *you* are changed, in every respect, of personal appearance, of habits, character, opinions, dispositions. As to the visible exterior, we doubtless might pass each other without the slightest recognition, the least hint of feeling that we had ever seen each other before. You would be never the wiser on the matter for a *portrait* which I see you mention in your letter to have seen, if it were the one which I just recollect to have seen in some magazine which I chanced to open in some house where I had occasion to call. There could be no authority for putting it there ; and it appeared to me a paltry imitation, with very little likeness, of a larger engraving, made from a drawing, for which I very reluctantly, at the request of some friends hereabouts, consented to sit to a painter here, which drawing was very true to the subject about a dozen (or perhaps more) years since. . . . .

But as to character, feelings, opinions, perhaps I may not be far wrong in presuming, that an uniform tenor of life, in an unchanged locality of residence, has prevented any other great change than what is inevitable from the effect of passing through so long a course of time and experience. As to myself, I can hardly tell whether I am much like what the young man was or not. In truth, I have a strangely imperfect recollection of what I was in early life ; nor could I, whatever effort I might deliberately make, draw out any clear account of what progressive time, though through a life of few incidents, and little change of external circumstances, has wrought upon me. Indeed, I should have difficulty



enough to describe what I am *now*. The thing I have the strongest impression of is, that I am far different from what I wish I were; that my improvement, through so long a life, has been miserably deficient; that, in the review, I have a profound conviction of the need of pardoning mercy over it all; and that I earnestly hope the remainder of life, of whatever duration, may be much more faithfully devoted to the great purpose of preparing for another—that mysterious, unveiled, and awful hereafter, on which both of us shall make the grand experiment, at no very distant time at the farthest.

. . . . . You, I believe, rather frequently preach, and I hope you will long be able to do so; though in your letter, so long since, you call yourself an “old man,” too old to journey hither; and I think I am too old to journey your distance northward. And what should I find if I *did*, in all the circuit with which I was acquainted? Perhaps *five or six*, at most, surviving of my ancient coevals! Happy, those of them who are gone, whither may the God of all grace prepare us to follow them! . . . I know not whether I should superscribe you *Reverend*. I thank no one for so designating me.

---

CXCHII. TO JOHN EASTHOPE, ESQ.

*November 20, 1835.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,— . . . The *Morning Chronicle* has shown a signal and progressive improvement in execution,—in clearness, force, point, happy illustration, range of allusion, and—*quantity*.

There is one thing I should have been disposed to make a remark on now and then, if I had been sitting quietly with you as at Cheltenham, or walking as at Malvern,—I mean, the mode, sometimes, of referring to the Catholic (*i. e.* popish) religion;—a slight tinge of that which makes the antithesis to the Rodens, O’Sullivans, & Co.—something like an implication, or negative admission at the least, that popery is not so bad a thing, that it is a religion of charity as well as any protestant mode of religion—something that seems to assert or assume that those furious and mischievous declaimers *are in the wrong in toto*, in their reprobation of popery itself, as well as their violence of temper and language, and perhaps the base principle and motive of some of them. Now surely we are not coming round to a virtual disavowal of the reformation, by a discovery at last that popery is *not* a most execrable and pernicious imposture, a deadly corruption of Christianity, and a system essentially intolerant, tyrannical, and malignant. No doubt it has, as a *practical* system, come under some degree of *compelled* modification in countries where liberty and knowledge have acquired the ascendant. But let it not take the credit of that. It is in itself (as indeed itself avows) unchangeable. Let these *compelling influences* (which it has always done all it could to resist) have the credit, and not popery itself, of whatever mitigation has *practically* taken place. The modern Catholics, in *this country*,

such as the late Butler and Eustace, the present Murray, O'Connell, &c., are protesting against the imputation to them and their church, of the persecuting spirit and the noxious principles. They, and their religion too, are all charity, candor, and benevolence—if you will believe them. But I *cannot* believe them. How should I, while they at the same time avow and swear a firm fidelity to a church which by the unalterable laws of its institute makes intolerance—the extirpation of heretics—a *duty*? When they come talking or canting in this strain, I would say to them, Your church, your sovereign authority, to which, on peril of your souls, you must maintain an inviolable fidelity,—has it ever revoked its sanguinary decrees and injunctions?—but indeed the very idea is foolish, since an infallible and unalterable authority *cannot* revoke its decrees. I would say, Do you disown the grand and final standard of your church, the Council of Trent? Answer, like honest, plain-spoken men, *Yes*, or *No*; and don't be playing fast and loose with us. If you say *No*, it is then in vain for you to pretend to charity, liberality and all that; in vain that you charge us with bigotry, and injustice in imputing to you the odious principles which are essentially inherent in your institution. If you say, *Yes*, and yet profess to adhere firmly to your church, what becomes of your fidelity, your consistency, your honesty? If you can thus, just as it serves your purpose, be off and on with your adored church—your very religion itself—how can we depend on your integrity in anything else? What, at this rate, really *are* your principles, and what *is* your unalterable, infallible church? Do not falter and mystify; but either explicitly declare that you abjure the intolerant and murderous maxims which that church binds you to maintain, and thus bravely incur its anathema, or distinctly avow that you maintain those maxims,—and then we shall know on what ground to meet you, and on what terms to give you that toleration which you virtually tell us you could not in *conscience grant to us*, if, as in Italy or Spain, you were powerful enough to withhold it. Tell us you approve that exercise of the church authority under which, in Italy, &c., a man (not having the rights and exemptions of a foreigner) could not publicly avow himself a Protestant but at the cost of his property, liberty, and probably his life. This would be honestly telling us that if only you had the *power* you would do the same here and everywhere.—It is only on this sanguinary and exterminating, but *essential*, principle of the Romish church that I am commenting. As to the many fooleries and corruptions of what may be called *simply religious* doctrine and institution, let them pass, as not *directly interfering with the civil peace of society*. Between these, however, and the *bloody maxims* of the popish church, the O'Sullivans, Boytons, &c., are furnished with weapons which, vilely as they use them, there is no getting out of their hands. And little less to be condemned than their fanaticism on the one hand, is, on the other, that sort of cant liberalism, now in vogue in some of our journals and speech-makings, which deprecates all zeal against popery, assuming, by implication at least, that one mode

of religion is just as good as another, that is, that none of them has any real basis in truth and divine authority. . . .

There has been expressed a great deal of contempt for the handle made by the fanatics of *Dens's Theology*; and some of the Irish Catholic prelates have affected to consider that as but a sort of obsolete thing, and to wonder it should have been brought from some musty recess against them. Now it did, I recollect, appear to me, that the Bishop of Exeter, in one of his speeches, decisively saddled those ecclesiastics with that book, as a work authorized by them both formerly and at the present time. Those Irish Catholics have been most infamously treated, all along, by the government and the Protestant ascendancy; but at the same time their leading ecclesiastics are evasive, equivocating, disingenuous men—not to use a harsher epithet. . . .

CXCIV. TO B. STOKES, ESQ.

*Stapleton, March 24, 1836.*

MY DEAR SIR,—. . . . I feel a very significant intimation of old age in extreme reluctance to any journeying and visiting movement, even when it is to see persons and things that I cannot but be gratified to see. . . . One thing is, that I have grown into a great reluctance to meet strangers—strangers of any order whatever. I acknowledged this to E., who kindly said, "Then we will have no strangers beyond one or two, whom I am sure you will be pleased to see." As to *seeing*, beyond seeing him and family, and seeing you, the object is, to see London. I was amused by his telling me, in one of his letters, that I should be as quiet and retired as I pleased, have country air, &c., while my object was, not to be retired at all, and to take in as little as I could help, of country air. What I should be after, would be in the thick of the town every day—in perfect contrast to the seclusion and rural scene and air at Stapleton. . . . The British Museum will be a very chief object with me; especially the apartment entirely occupied by *engravings*. My taste has been in that way, to an unfortunate excess, and there may there be inspected innumerable fine and rare things hardly to be seen (at least, by me) anywhere else. It is too likely I shall want several days, chiefly in that enormous assemblage of art and nature. Amidst such spectacles, however, it is a great grievance, and partly a shame, to me, to be so destitute as I am, of *scientific* knowledge. I can only gaze and admire in a mere outside way,—just so far as the things are a show to the sight. It is now too late in life for me to aim at any other than the most superficial knowledge.

CXCV. TO JOHN EASTHOPE, ESQ.

*Stapleton, April 8, 1836.*

. . . . The special and duplicate paper . . . . instantly explained its

purpose, on my opening it. I had failed to notice the "Poet's Corner," as I remember the old newspapers, in Yorkshire, used to have it. The successive pieces have been unequal, but for the greater part, sparkling and mischievous enough. Capitally fantastic, witty, and brilliant, that about *Jupiter's breakfast*. There is the very viper's tooth in the two pieces about the *Chimpanzee*. How one should like to have seen its effect on that coxcomb —. Do you ever happen to hear how these detonating balls are actually taken by those they are thrown at? The thorough veterans, one has always heard, maintain their philosophy perfectly well under such assailments; but to the greener sort one would fancy they may be rather annoying.

The graver people (of whom I am one) have their objection, and may have it without being at all ultra-puritanical, to that tinge of *profaneness* which the satirist infuses into some of his pieces. Perhaps Jupiter and Hebe might be very well allowed to consign themselves to the Devil, but they had better not have done it in the hearing of the many decorous and even religious people who may be supposed to read the *Morning Chronicle*. It is really not well-judged, even on the score of good taste, and what I may call literary dignity, to make no higher reference, in the most witty as well as most ingenious and elegant poet now alive, to indulge himself in diction and allusions accommodated to the appetite of men who trifle with the most serious subjects—an appetite which he probably does in his own mind hold in condemnation and contempt. The wit and the penal justice of satire should eschew such an unworthy association.

---

CXCVI. TO THE REV. JOSIAH HILL.

*Stapleton, the longest day, 1836.*

MY DEAR SIR,— . . . The thing most on my mind just at this instant is—chagrin, vexation, mortification, self-accusation, for a chief folly of my life—*having bought so many books*; which are looking insultingly at me from their crowded shelves all round the room; and I seem to hear a note of scorn from within sundry boxes, in which are immured a score or two of the splendid and costly ones—in which score or two are sunk a sum which would have furnished a very decent whole library for a dissenting, or even a Methodist preacher.

I am the more irritably sensitive to this mockery of theirs from the condition of my *eyes*, which, during all the summer part of the year (and *this year especially*), cannot endure the business of reading without a very painful force put on them.

When to this disablement of the reading organ, I add the consideration that, however good that organ were, a whole century of years from this time would not suffice to read once through all these volumes—and then the other circumstance, that I *forget everything* I read or have read—and then cap this accumulation of considerations with one more, or

rather the double, consideration of what has been expended, *not only of income*, but of hundreds of pounds of *principal* sunk—and the difference between what they cost and what the very same books might be had for *now*—when I put all these items of mortification together, the result is a very hot caustic on my *conscience* as well as on other parts of the mental sensorium.

. . . . To be sure, some of these things may have been of some little value, for pleasure or perhaps a certain kind of instruction, in the meantime, but nothing like enough to compensate the difference. A *rich* man would not need to care, but when I consider how straitened, during a whole quarter of a century, *my* limited means have been, by the indulgence in the *fine* sort of literature, I cannot help feeling mortification and self-reproach. Especially I feel so at the thought how much better it would have been for a considerable part of this expenditure, if I could really spare it, to have gone to the service of charitable and religious objects. Not that I have not managed to do my share in *that* way also; perhaps beyond some of my better endowed neighbors; but I should most willingly have done more in that way but for the unfortunate drain aforesaid. And so too would my late beloved associate, one of the most liberal-minded of human beings. It is, indeed, one of my regrets in the remembrance of her, that this imprudent expenditure imposed too hard an economy on *her* benevolence. . . . But for a very unexpensive manner of life (the preclusion of luxury, travelling, &c.) the expenditure in question would have been impossible. I am reminded of "*Whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?*" The book-and-print fineries will most likely, as in all other cases, go to the auction room one day or other, and will bring for—who can tell whom? perhaps a fourth part of what they cost. As to the crowd of the common order of books, I should willingly make presents of some hundreds of volumes; but I find that, excepting such as I am still unwilling to dislodge from the shelves, they are, for the most part, not of a kind to be of any use to persons I would give them to. Sundry useful and some valuable ones I have, for several years past, given to some of the most meritorious of the students in the Academy; and a number (such as the late Anderson judged to be necessary and useful) have gone to its library.

. . . . Do you stand quite aloof from the grand *dissenting commotion*? They—(I say not *we*, for I should not have been a concurring particle in the dust the dissenters have raised,—I mean as to the *extent* of their demands) . . . have mistaken their policy in calling out (*at present*) for the "*separation*," a thing most palpably impracticable, till a few more Olympiads have passed over us. . . .

---

CXCIV. TO THE REV. JOSIAH HILL.

*Stapleton, Aug. 19, 1836.*

. . . . With about, perhaps, one-tenth part of your experience of local

removals, I can yet well understand what an annoyance it is. Have you any particular feeling about becoming attached to a spot, simply as a place of residence? I have always felt an indisposition to contract such an attachment, independently of not having had any strong local cause for it, and from a kind of feeling of incongruity between such adhesions and our grand destiny to leave, ere long, all earthly localities—to abandon the globe itself. I have mused sometimes in wonder, when I have seen persons, perhaps far forward beyond the youthful age, building houses, laying out grounds, contriving, and assiduous in making, what are called “improvements;” delighted with the spot, pulling their friends about through walk after walk, and from point to point, to show them how beautiful, how commodious, how improved from its original condition; how, perhaps, picturesque; “Isn’t it a pleasant spot to set one’s self down in?” One’s silent reflection was—“Yes; and for how long?” Some of them will say, it is in consideration of their families, of “my son;”—but the truth is almost always, it is chiefly their own passion for the thing, in forgetfulness of the funeral that will, one no immensely distant day, be seen passing from this pleasant abode to one narrow, cold, and dark enough. I have always thought, that were I a man of fortune, and located in what is called a “seat,” I should take no kind of interest about its adjustments and “improvements,” beyond some matter of mere immediate convenience.

. . . . I felt no very strong excitement (too old and too cold) among the wonders and the grandeurs of the great Babylon, but in returning into the stillness of this obscure den, I felt, for a week or more, as if I could do nothing but sleep. . . . In looking from the top of the colosseum, over the city, the first on our planet beyond all doubt or comparison, one could not help the invading thought, What an awful, what a direful spectacle it was in one view,—the stupendous amount of *sin* in it. Oh, when will the predicted better age arrive?

Thanks for the Watchman; but you will not send the *other* number; nobody in this world is willing to let one know the whole truth of things. . . .

---

CXCVIII. TO JOHN PURSER, ESQ.

*Stapleton, August 26, 1836.*

MY DEAR SIR, . . . . I am very much gratified by the information, that you have resumed your proper position, as adherent and assistant to the Baptist interest in Dublin. No man can have a higher respect than I (as far as my knowledge goes) for the Moravians. But I confess I was sorry for your (apparent) secession from what I will call “the good old cause,” in the long protracted day of its adversity.

A good while since I heard of the relinquishment of Swift’s Alley. I am now gratified by Mr. Bliss’s information, that a substitute is rising, or on the point of rising, in so vastly different a locality as Stephen’s

Green. If the change in the condition of what we name the *interest*, shall at all correspond to such a change of *place*, a happy season will come at last. . . . What a long history of depression! dating from and including my own temporary occupation there. I am too conscious of my own great deficiency in my duty there, to have anything to say of my many successors; in all reason and candor, I ought, and am most ready, to believe that none of them has been equally deficient.

This self-accusatory recollection put aside, how many images belonging to those times arise in my memory! Your estimable parents it were superfluous even to name, or your sister. . . . There was Meath-dwelling, Montpelier, the scenes of the vicinity, the park, the barracks, the school-room on (was it not?) *Arran Quay*; the numberless talks among us on numberless subjects, yourself a prompt and very shrewd interlocutor. There were the "Sons of Brutus," watched, they were told after they had ceased to meet, by Major Sirr, and among them the intelligent Green, master of some parish school (on second thought, I am not sure he *was* one of them, or, I should say, *us*).

. . . Perhaps it is probable that I, having an insulated remembrance—a retrospect enclosed and secluded as it were, within a section of time severed from the before and after—may have a more marked and distinct ideal vision than you; since, living on, permanently, the same ground, you would partly lose the things of that time in their sequel, seeing many of them gradually and insensibly changing and passing away, by a process that had no one great chasm to separate off the former stage, as one scene remaining alone in your memory. As to some other things (localities and objects not subject to change), having continued habitually familiar to you, they are, to you, simply, if I may so express it, what they *are*, and not what they stand pictured exclusively in the remembrance—remembrance that lays the scene in a far-off time.

I have still to confess, and am somewhat vexed at it, the total want of power in my mind to make *one* person of *you two*, the *boy* whom I so vividly remember, and the middle-aged *man*, whom I had the surprise and pleasure of seeing one day here. I even doubt whether, if I were to pass weeks and months daily with you, I should be able to make anything like a complete personal identification. I do believe the John Purser, of far towards forty years since, would be continually coming in upon me as if he must be, or have been, somebody else than the person I was actually seeing and conversing with. It would, no doubt, be partly the same with respect to *Mrs. Purser*, of whom I retain a distinct image, though my being so much less familiar with her at that time, might somewhat lessen this insuperable sense of *doubleness*. The experiment, at any rate, would, to me, be very curious and interesting.

. . . My dear friend, the retrospect over which I have been glancing, pensively as a prevailing sentiment, seems to carry us rather afar on a track which we can tread no more; but how reduced to nothing is the distance in comparison of the stupendous *prospect*! While called to be

grateful for all that a good Providence has done for us in the past, and to implore pardon in the name of our Lord, for everything which we had cause to wish had been differently done on our part, we are solemnly admonished to be looking forward, with increasing seriousness, to the *grand Futurity*. Whatever may be our appointed remaining time on earth, we are sure it is little enough for a due preparation to go safely and happily forward into that eternal Hereafter. . . .

---

CXCIX. TO MRS. STOKES.

*Bourton, Oct. 7, 1836.*

MY DEAR MADAM, . . . In this house and vicinity there are many things to remind me of the past. I have not in my mind a strongly *associating* principle. There are certain temporary, involuntary, and apparently *casual* moods of feeling, which, in whatever place they may occur, revive the images and sentiments of the past more vividly than they would be brought back by the *mere* force of objects and places associated with those retrospective interests. Still, there are here objects, apartments, garden-walks, with which an interesting and pensive memory is inseparably connected. They tell me of one inestimable being, united with me here, here separated from me, and now, here or elsewhere, with me no more on earth. I often imagine what it would have been, and would be, to have her with me still. But when I consider what a drooping, suffering life was appointed to her, during the latter part of her presence with me, and what I am confident she has gained by the change, the regret for my loss is greatly counterbalanced by the delight of thinking of her felicity; of the surpassing superiority of what she has enjoyed, and is enjoying, over all she could have experienced in this mortal state, even had it been much more propitious to her than it could have been, under the circumstances of frail and shattered health, and a painful oversusceptibility of mind. To rejoin her at length is my earnest desire for her daughters and myself. As to *them*, I am exceedingly far from indulging any gratifying anticipations with respect to *this* life. I have uniformly a melancholy idea of the destiny of women, considering how many kinds of danger, and how much of the grievances and sufferings of life there are often in their allotment. How I marvel at the thoughtless pleasure of parents, in seeing their children grow up, and dreaming about their future prospects! I often say, what is become of their eyes or any of their senses, while there is the actual world around them, to tell them what is the very possible destiny in this life, to say nothing of another, of the young creatures, about whom they have so many thoughtlessly sanguine fancies! I will *hope* better things for these girls; but I never dream *such* dreams, and never did.

Worcester, also, had its reminiscences. What a lapse of years since the first time that I experienced there the cordial friendship, of which I



have had so many gratifying proofs, in the long subsequent interval; and since the first of our little social travelling adventures, which were to be followed by our delightful excursions in North Wales. More, much more than the third part of life, taken at its long reckoning of "three score years and ten," gone away, since that point of our mortal sojourn! How many events, changes, mercies, admonitions, in this long period! Would that the *improvements*, of the most important order, had corresponded to this great sum of the motives, and aids, and progressively louder calls to that improvement. My own reflections are deeply accusatory. I often think, what insupportable melancholy would oppress and overwhelm me, if there were not the grand resource of the one all-sufficient Sacrifice offered for sin. At the same time, let us, each and all, entreat the Divine assistance, that whatever remainder of time is reserved for us, may be so improved as to be *greatly the best part* of a life which is so rapidly hastening to its termination. I remain, dear madam,

Yours, with cordial and grateful regard,

and ever friendly wish,

J. FOSTER.

CC. TO J. WADE, ESQ.

*December 21, 1836.*

. . . . But what base, worthless wretches those fellows are. It is really grievous and surprising, that never once can a sober, honest man be found that will do just the very moderate duty that you require. It makes one sometimes almost ashamed of one's *democracy*, to have so many glaring proofs of the utterly unprincipled character of so large a portion of what are called "the lower orders," in a nation so vaunted for "enlightened," "civilized," "Christian," and all that. One is amazed to hear any intelligent advocate of the "*popular rights*," stickling for "*universal suffrage*." Think of such fellows as you have to do with, being qualified to have a vote in the choice of *legislators*!!

CCI. TO THE REV. JOSIAH HILL.

*February 18, 1837.*

. . . . We, of this little family, are not duly thankful to the protecting Providence for having all escaped, while multitudes in the city and its neighborhood have been visited, and very many, as I hear, fatally. At this instant I see through the window the top of a mourning coach, following a hearse. Strange and sad consideration! that prevailing sickness and death are the desired, welcomed (?) means of life, gain, prosperity, to a portion of the fellow-mortals of the sufferers and victims.

Doctors, druggists, and undertakers, are flourishing on this calamity, like gay flowers about the graves in a church-yard.

The disastrous and, one thinks, unprecedented season does at length give some wavering and reluctant signs of change. The change has not been waited for by the intimations of spring, in snow-drops and crocuses. Welcome are they once more, though they seem to tell me, most pointedly, how short a time since their tribe was here before, and therefore with what appalling velocity life is running off.

Your guess is true that I have been (though not violently against my will) very nearly a prisoner, during the past months. As to "company," dinner-parties, tea-visits, they have been, with very small exceptions, out of the question. I have been under peremptory medical inhibition to be out in the night air. A cough, first occasioned by the old cause, the miserable heating and subsequent chilling from the wet clothes in summer, and renewed at intervals down into the foggy autumn, produced at last an effect which I was forced to regard as somewhat serious—an effusion, not large (and not repeated) of blood, from, Dr. Stenson told me, the windpipe, and together with prescriptions, enjoined me to keep within the house, and to avoid—one thing and another—as especially preaching, an infrequent, indeed, but now and then occurring exercise. I have been tolerably, though (except on the last point) not punctiliously obsequious, have had no return of the ominous symptom, and have very little cough,—but find myself far more liable to its return, from a very slight cold-taking, than a person sound in the affected part would be.

. . . . As to public and parliamentary affairs, you complain that we are to have the same old battled business over again. But how else can any good be gained against the obstinate resisters of all improvement? As O'Connell was lately telling them in Ireland, it is only by keeping at it, by persisting, reiterating, hammering, that an effectual impression can be made on the public mind, and through that, on the hostile obstinacy, or sluggish indifference of those on whom immediately the business depends. Some parts of that business are of an importance and an urgency quite portentous. Think of the condition of *Ireland*, in the event of the frustration of the measures in its favor—such a frustration as should not leave any hope of success within a near and assured prospect. Those who can coolly look at, and hazard, the probable consequences, must be either villains or madmen. . . .

---

CCH. TO THE REV. JOSIAH HILL.

*Stapleton, April 15, 1837.*

. . . . You are hardly unaware that there is something a little fallacious in your mood of thinking and feeling about activity in public affairs. If all well-principled and able men were to indulge that mood, the great interests of the community would go desperately to corruption

and ruin. Just think, for want of the requisite number, activity, and co-operation of such men, what a condition those interests have been in, for a long succession of years, up to the commencement of the recent national rousing. A vast hell of wars; bad legislation; profligacy in all administration; all correction of old rotten institutions resisted; total indifference to the uneducated, barbarous condition of the people; every kind of corruption practised with impunity, under protection of a monopoly of power; hatred, almost or wholly to the length of persecution, of those who have dared to expose the iniquities and preach reform. Has it not struck you, over and over again, that *every* part of the system, on coming at last under resolute investigation, has turned out worse than all previous opinion or suspicion had surmised? Now are good men to be told that all this is no concern of theirs, and on the plea of not involving themselves in the turmoil of worldly and political affairs, quietly and piously to let it all go on, from bad to worse; to leave it all in the same profligate hands,—till Providence shall work a miracle for its reformation? It is but slight rebuke that you will incur for *one* particular in your avowal, that you care “far more about my poor Catherine and John, than for either king or country, church or state;” but when you say the same thing of what constitutes the collective community, with their immense collective interests, do you forget that there are unnumbered thousands of *other* Johns and Catherinees, to be affected for good or evil, in numberless ways, by the beneficial or injurious operation of the national system? If all had acted on the principle of caring little about any but their own, we should have had no public spirited men; no patriots; no magnanimous vindicators of the rights of the oppressed; none who, while their *own families* were the first in their regard, yet felt indignant that *myriads* of *other families* were the worse, in various ways and degrees, for a corrupt and vicious management of the concerns of the community. The crisis of the affairs of this country, balancing and wavering between the growing impulse toward improvements of incalculable value, and the powerful, obstinate resistance made by the old corrupt system—a crisis including the perfectly tremendous state and possibilities of Ireland, and involving the interests of perhaps a million of families there, are not, methinks, matters which any of us should deem insignificant in comparison with our own domestic interests. Unless a vast number and combination of men, while maintaining all due regard for what they respectively have at home, will yet take a zealous and untiring concern in these public affairs, designs of immense utility will be frustrated, and there will inevitably be a long course of agitation, danger, and disaster. . . . So ends my sermon, and most likely with the same effect as too many other sermons. . . .

---

CCHII. TO J. PURSER, JR., ESQ.

*Stapleton, May 30, 1837.*

MY DEAR SIR,— . . . Many of my recollections of early life have

faded, and they never had the captivation and complacency which some men seem to feel. But the sojourn in Dublin is often revived in my memory with peculiar distinctness, and a pleasing though pensive interest. In the time and scene thus recalled, you, as in your early juvenility, are a conspicuous figure. I have a *very* marked image of your appearance and looks—of which I dare say you yourself have retained no image at all, no more than I have of mine, as at that or an earlier stage of life. Can you shape anything like a defined conception of what were your prevailing feelings, notions, tastes, aspirations, at that time?

What an immensity of things have passed over, and away from, every earthly scene in this interval of forty years! You say that in Dublin I should “find much to revive old recollections.” I almost doubt it. A few localities excepted, there must be so complete a sweep from the stage, that the things for *recollection to hold by* are gone. There cannot be the lingering remainders to recall what *was*. As to the living world, it would be just wholly new, not connected with the preceding, by retaining still some portion of it, to verify the relationship, to show it to be in continuity and succession. Why, there is not probably one single human being, besides yourself and your wife, that would be, or could be made, an object of my recollection. One other there would have been, it seems, very recently. My eye was very strongly arrested by the name of Mrs. Butler. How well I remember her! What then, she has lived throughout this wide interval, approaching to half a century, and having not been a young person at its so remote commencement! She *would* have been one of the diminutive number of the vital threads of connection (if I may so express it) between the existing generation and that which has vanished. But the feeling at sight of her would have been something like what should say, “Why are you lingering here, belonging so plainly as you do to the great company that is departed?”

The class of us the most advanced in age are for the most part so blended and implicated with the next in order, and the next after that, that it requires some thought to detach ourselves so as to see plainly where we stand. We are apt to be looking too much around us, and behind us, to observe how near we are to the *brink*. If even I, at the age of nearly sixty-seven, and much apart from society and worldly concerns, need continual admonitions about this, you, at a dozen or more years behind me, and so closely surrounded by numerous and diversified family interests, with business in additino, will be very apt to need every monitory intimation how much of life is gone, and how fast the remainder is going.

For myself I have recently had some extra and ominous hints, or rather very direct warnings. A succession of colds and coughs, within the last year or two, added to a relaxation of the throat, which twenty or more years since disabled me for regular preaching, has had the effect of leaving me liable to an effusion of blood, from the rupture of some vessel adjacent to the throat. This has occurred several times within the last half year, the worst instance of it being within the last few days. I am not advised that this involves or indicates “immediate danger” (that is the

phrase you know), but that it imperatively speaks the necessity of great caution, medical assistance, the avoidance "for the present" (another of the phrases), of all considerable exertion in the way of speaking, and a total, final interdict on preaching.

You speak of "grey hairs and some debility of action." Quite in the natural course; and you will lay your account with an increase (perhaps in an increasing *ratio*) of these significant intimations. Yet I hope you will yet long (but in how modified sense of that word!) retain a competence of strength and health for much useful activity, combined with a considerable degree of the enjoyment of life;—still with a constant recollection, that it is an *introduction*, and is verging continually and fast toward a solemn junction with that to which it is the introduction. And what will *that* be? Oh the mystery of that great Hereafter!

I congratulate you sincerely on the pleasure and every other advantage caused you by an excellent wife and——*eight* descendants! You would show me, you say, *six sons*;—but I should be *frightened*;—nay, what is to ensure me against actual *danger*? Six young Irishmen,—and Irishmen being such as you describe them, that is to say, of "ferocious disposition," needing strong coercion for the safety of those who have to do with them. Assuredly I should not dare to confront those redoubtable six one moment sooner or longer than you were present, and indeed Mrs. P. in addition, in order to secure the mitigating, lenient effect of female influence. With this and a few other provisos I should enter your house (castle) with very great interest, and by the time I was certain of *safety*, should stay some time there, and thereabout, with very great pleasure. I thank you sincerely for your kind invitation. I have never quite surrendered the idea and the hope of revisiting Dublin; but I am become to a strange degree a sort of local fixture; not having, for instance, till last summer, reached so far as London for sixteen years. And now the recent indications as to health tend to throw doubtfulness on all projects and prospects. . . .

Everybody in his right senses here deplores the state of Ireland, and abhors that Ascendency which has hitherto been its plague, and has yet a formidable power to frustrate the endeavors at a better policy. Our government is in a strangely anomalous and perilous position. There will be a long protracted and mortal conflict.

. . . . I have just heard of the death of Mrs. Osborn of Cork, for whom, as Ann Richards, I had a great partiality. I have regretted to understand that she was a confirmed Socinian; greatly regretted it; for it does appear to me a tremendous hazard to go into the other world in that character. The exclusion from Christianity of that which a Socinian rejects would reduce *me* instantly to black despair. . . .

---

CCIV. TO THE REV. JOHN FAWCETT.

June 2, 1837.

MY DEAR OLD FRIEND,—. . . It must be since I wrote to you that I

had a long conversation with Mrs. J——, lately of Hebden Bridge, in which I obtained several points of information concerning the *terra incognita* of that neighborhood. As to Hebden Bridge itself, she described it as stretched out into a long continuity of houses, reaching I forget how far. This, on a more moral account than its breaking up the old picture in my imagination, did not please me at all. It was just saying there were so many more *sinners* in the locality. Unless mankind were better, an augmented number is nothing to be pleased with. On the contrary I am always apt to be pleased at seeing vacated sites, and houses deserted and in ruins. This gratification is too seldom afforded in these times. It is a considerable number of years since I had it to my full contentment, at a place a good way down on the west coast, where a score or two of houses, visited some years before by the *reform* of a fire, remained as dilapidated walls going fast to decay. I have always a restive feeling that knows not how to go into pleasure, at the promises sometimes made to the Jews in the Old Testament, of a prodigiously multiplied posterity. Now you are smiling (or affecting to smile) at all this as a cynical whim, a wanton perversity. But pray, now, do look at the collective moral and religious state of the species, even in this so vaunted nation, exhibiting so sad a preponderance of what is not good, in the high and alone satisfactory sense; and soberly consider whether an augmentation of such an existence be really a cause for exultation.

A better age, both for this and every other country, will come, assuredly. But do you not sometimes muse in a kind of gloomy wonder on the present dark aspect of the world,—in which even the precursory signs of the *approach* are so faint or dubious? You were not, I think, quite so sanguine in early life as I was. Recollecting my morning, crude, prospective dreams, I can imagine what a damp it would have been, what a heavy snow in May, if I could have foreseen, at the distance of about half a century forward, the state of the world just as it actually is at this day. In those visions there was, no doubt, much of what a sound mature judgment might, at the time, have convicted of folly. The grand excitement had far too little in it of a moral and religious principle, far too little recognition of the Governor of the world, to authorize such magnificent anticipations of moral and political good. But still, methinks, it might (before the proof) have been assumed as probable that such a prodigious awakening of human energy would be directed by that sovereign Power to the destruction of a much larger portion of the fearful system of evils that still lies and tyrannizes on the human race. On every field of thought the awful mystery of the divine government surrounds us with its darkness, and abases our speculations and presumptions.

The political state of this nation is becoming formidable, the war being *mortal* between the two orders of principles, with their respectively arrayed masses. No peace but by the subjugation of one of the antagonist powers. Which is it to be? Not the *democratic* certainly, for it is in a process of continually augmenting force, notwithstanding any tem-

porary interruptions and defeats. But it is in vain to calculate the duration of the conflict before the other can be prostrated, possessed as it is of such vast advantages.

How do the affairs among you as between the church and dissenters shape themselves? I hope the latter will not be wanting in spirit to assert themselves. They see clearly now that they have no other remedy but what is in their own hands. Let them everywhere avail themselves of that, and the government will at last be forced, even for the *church's sake*, to do them justice. Our great desideratum is (what we cannot have yet, nor for a long time) a *genuine* House of Commons. In the present thing so called there are many scores of knaves and fools, who got there by the vilest means.

We (you, your wife, and I) shall not live to see any great amendment in the world. Shall we, when in that *other* to which we are going, receive any information of the changes on that which we shall have left? But think of the stupendous change and novelty of *being in another world!* And it will not be very long before. Each of us in near approach to *seventy!* I believe you have both had good health. I hope you still have—for *that age*. I have been in this respect highly favored through life. But recently,—I may say at this hour, I have some very monitory omens, being under rigid medical treatment in consequence of the rupture of some vessel in the neighborhood of the throat, indicated by a very considerable effusion of blood twice within ten days. I am told that great and protracted care may arrest the evil. But it is a formidable intimation; and will, I hope, have the effect, under divine influence, of rendering me more earnest in preparation for the demolition, at whatever time, of the whole tabernacle. A circumstance of the same kind, but not in the same degree, occurred to me about half a year since. So long exempt from any recurrence, I have not been duly careful. . . .

---

CCV. TO B. STOKES, ESQ.

June 9, 1837.

. . . . It often occurs to me, when thinking of striking spectacles here and there on the earth that I can never see, "But I shall infallibly behold, at no distant time, something incomparably *more* striking, new, and marvellous." To behold, to be in the midst of, another economy, another world! And with an amazing change, of the very *manner*, personally, of existence; to be in communication with a new order of realities by a totally different medium of perception; having, in relinquishing this world, relinquished also the entire organization by which the spirit maintained its connection with it.

Imagine a very brief, as nearly as might be a sudden, transition from the ordinary state of feeling, to that which would be caused at sight of the most striking phenomenon on earth; and then imagine, just at that

highest excitement of emotion, an instant transition by death into the other world ;—would not this second rush of amazement on the soul transcend the previous one to a far mightier degree than the previous one would have surpassed the ordinary state of feeling ?

But again, and again, comes the thought, "Though I shall never behold the supposed grand phenomena of this world, *that other* transcendent amazement I am certain to experience ; and the more mighty will it be that I have no previous knowledge or conjecture concerning the manner of it."

And how mortifying, what reason for intense self-reproach, that with this certainty before me, and in a continual approximation, the mysterious prospect should not have a more habitually commanding influence over me ;—over my thoughts, devotions, and habits of life ! A correction, a reformation, a renovation of feeling, is the thing imperatively demanded. . . .

---

CCVI. TO THE REV. JOSIAH HILL.

*September 23, 1837.*

. . . . This is All-Saints' day with the Independent tribe in Bristol ;—speeches by exhibitors fresh from all nations, peoples, and languages. I was something like disposed to force my inclination, and go to see and hear, for the *useful* sake, to myself I mean, of witnessing the character and varieties of the spectacle ; but the inveterate repugnance was invincible. But really I wish it had not [been]. For I am so totally secluded here that I have no *immediate* impression of what men are, or are doing. . . .

It seems that even you . . . . could not keep the soul of which you are the owner from getting a whirl in the late great vortex ; wishing, hoping, fearing ; disappointed, mortified, indignant ; just all the same unhallowed emotions as one's self. It is truly a grievous result, and a disastrous predicament. Interminable war, now, with very small and dear-bought successes to the liberal cause ; merely an exemption from absolute defeat ; the grand measures of national improvement (*education* among the rest) either not (from hopelessness) attempted, or contemptuously quashed. Why is this suffered to be—under the government of the supreme Authority, the only Potentate ? Just because the nation is to be wicked and is to be plagued. It is a judicial dispensation. This is the idea often forced on one's mind, in looking over the state of the world. What a glaring instance is Spain ! One would think that it is beyond mere human stupidity and perversity to manage the nation's affairs so wretchedly. There must be a special *divine* malediction, doom-ing that barbarous, cruel, superstitious, and bigoted people to miseries from which there seems no escape ; their counsels and proceedings under a continual infatuation ; the most favorable occasions lost ; the



efficient means systematically thrown away; the whole condition of life and life's interests in distraction. . . .

---

CCVII. TO B. STOKES, ESQ.

*Nov. 25, 1837.*

. . . . Our good M. P. has but little in prospect, in that public capacity, to set against what in his private one he feels so painfully. He enters the service justly indignant against every party, and has little or nothing better to look forward to than a long, vexatious, and nearly useless course of toil and conflict, perhaps to end in a break-up of the whole rotten concern. I wish he were out of it, if only there were another honest man to take his place. But that sort of thing is most scandalously scarce—the sort of thing, that is to say, which every man in the world ought to be.—It is fearful to think what the final account must be, at the award of infallible Justice, for the immense multitude of accountable creatures. And how desperately heedless of all such consideration they are, even those who, as in our nation and time, are the most instructed, or have the means of being so, and are therefore the most accountable. . . . But these politics run away with one, even when talking to old friends, with whom one has so many recollections, lively or pensive, and has spent so many hours, days, and weeks, amidst interests, occupations, and scenes, far apart from political affairs. Lately I was recollecting our first interview, when Mr. Coles brought a stranger, in whom I could not foresee so cordial a friend for so long a period; as to whom and myself it was little within the probability of life's duration that I should at this (then very far off) time be writing to him. I proceeded on, from that original point of remembrance, through the successive periods of the long lapse of nearly thirty years; dwelling a while on some of the most remarkable times and scenes, down to the social weeks, or rather months, of the last year; and to the time when, excepting a few pleasing hours, I was disappointed of seeing you here. A long series of interesting reminiscences,—combining what is gratifying in friendship with what is memorable in situations and incidents. All this is of the past!—and the review brings us to the solemn reflection, what a very large portion of our allotted sojourn on earth has been expended and has vanished, between the first term and the last of the retrospect; which reflection passes immediately into the emphatic monition, how near we are coming to the termination of that sojourn, to the moment of transition to another world; and how earnest and habitual should be our solicitude and our diligence to be prepared for that world where there may be a happy and an endless friendship. . . .

---

CCVIII. TO JAMES FAWCETT, ESQ.

*February 24, 1838.*

DEAR SIR,— . . . The feelings with which I heard of the decease

(not till several weeks after the event) of my valued old friend, your excellent father, were pensive even to sadness. He and Mr. Greaves were the peculiarly favorite friends of my youth. And so deeply fixed was my conviction of his virtues, and so faithful my memory of his cordial kindness at that far-off period, and additionally testified by his letters, that I have retained invariably my friendly regard throughout the long absence of not less than thirty-five years. Since the information of the mournful event I have often retraced in thought the scenes, the intercourse, the little social adventures and incidents, of that early time; his person, voice, habits, and domestic associates and circumstances, are vividly presented to my imagination. I cannot but feel regret, now when it is in vain, at the entire loss of personal intercourse, caused by great distance, my dislike of travelling, my feeling no attraction to my native place, as such, and our respective occupations. I am wondering how he appeared in advanced age; the image of him in my mind being exclusively that of his appearance in youth, or before the attainment of middle age. I saw him for the last time, one transient hour in the neighborhood of London: but I think it was not *within* the long period that I have mentioned. Doubtless if we had met at any recent time, without being previously apprised, it would have been, till explanation, as perfect strangers; mutually the victims and monuments of Time.

. . . . You will all have been consoled amidst your affectionate sorrow by the consideration of his happy exchange; an event deferred, too, for the sake of those whom he loved and who loved him, to so late a period of life, that any great prolongation would have been a stage of infirmity, decline, and perhaps the pains which inflict, as it were, a portion of death before the termination of life. He had lived also to see his family advanced to maturity, acting their appointed parts in life; and all, I hope and trust, entered on and pursuing a course which will bring each of them one day to an end like his. You have the pleasure also of reflecting on his consistent, honorable, and useful life, from his pious childhood to his latest day;—a well-sustained religious character for I may say, *sixty years*, for he must at his decease have been bordering on *seventy*.

A loss which nothing now in this world can adequately compensate will have caused your mother a painful sense of desolation, at an age which no longer retains the elasticity of spirit, the animated force of reaction, by which younger people, in active excitement and with life before them, are so soon relieved from the pressure of such a dispensation. I trust resignation to the Divine will, the looking forward to a better world, combined with the affectionate interest in her children, and the pleasure of seeing them wise and good, and favored by Providence, will impart to her a consolation effectual to cheer the remainder of her life. How well I remember her cheerfulness, her vivacity of spirit, near forty years since. . . . I am glad of [your] brother's favorable prospects for usefulness and happiness, and hope that a name so long honored

in connection with religion, will long continue faithfully in that connection. . . .

---

CCIX. TO THE REV. DR. PRICE.

*February, 1838.*

. . . . Professor Elton of Rhode Island, has sent me a very curious book of the date indeed of three or four years back, written by an "Honorable Mr. Durfee, Supreme Judge" in that island. It is a poem nearly or quite as long as *Paradise Lost*, under the grotesque title of "*What-Cheer*," which was an exclamation of a party of friendly savages on a particular occasion, very long since. The *time* is some two centuries since; the starting-point-fact is a case of persecution by the rigorous good Puritan bigots of New England, against an assertor of religious freedom, a man memorable and venerable in the American ecclesiastical history. This persecution drives him out into the wilderness, in the horrid snowy desolation of mid-winter, still heroically trusting in Providence. He goes among the savages, and his adventures with them, and the strange wild characteristic scenes and transactions in their society, form the eventful narrative. I hardly know what, exactly, to say of the *poetry*; but it is at least strikingly graphical, perspicuous in detail and narrative, and in a plain, unaffected language, a little of the antiquish, and perfectly suitable to the subject. It is founded, in part, on the actual recorded history of the *hero*; and, as to the general character of the exhibition, seems a faithful picture of the *then* manners, customs, and notions of the Aborigines. I dare say there can have been no notice of such a production in the *Eclectic*, or probably any other of our *Reviews*. And I think a moderate article of considerable interest and curiosity might be made of it. With your leave I will try. . . .

---

CCX. TO THE REV. THOMAS COLES.

*August 3, 1838.*

. . . . It gives me very special pleasure to hear of the very favorable state and prospects of your situation; not the less so, of course, that I have always wished that you might find good reason to decide against transferring your public services from where they had been patiently prosecuted so long. It is highly gratifying, that in what may be called the autumn of your life and ministry, a kind of spring season should return in the congregation, in the growing up of a youthful race in a disposition of mind, as to many of them, so pleasing and hopeful. I will hope, that in this you will find, in no small degree, a reward of your patient perseverance through years of less pleasing experience, through various discouragements and vexations.

You are reported in a high state of health, promising, I hope, a long postponement of the infirmities of declining age. How long would you wish to live, if the term were supposed to be placed at your choice? If the Power, who has the disposal, might be supposed to put before you a succession of figures, 70, 75, 80, 85, 90—and say—“Choose, and it shall be so,” *unconditionally* as to what should be the attendant circumstances of each term, *that* being left in total uncertainty as to *your* knowledge—would you be greatly perplexed? would it take you a long time and hesitation to decide on which of the numbers you should place your finger, that act, that single touch being an absolute, irrevocable decision? One is often reproachfully reminded, that with our confident belief of the grand superiority of another life and scene, if we had the full, deliberate consciousness of a due preparation for it, there would require an effort, a repressive effort of submission to the divine disposal, to prevent an ever-rising impatience of the soul to escape from this dark and sinful world, and go out on the sublime adventure.

You now stand, as it were, between two equal divisions of your family, three of them remaining on earth, and three, you feel assured, in the enjoyment of a happier existence elsewhere. You have thus a social and family relationship, in equal proportions, with two different provinces of the great kingdom. . . .

---

CCXI. TO DR. STENSON.

1838.

WE must acknowledge, my dear sir, that it is well there should be a sanguine spirit in the enterprises for reforming the world. Enthusiasm is as necessary as any other element. A cool, strict, cautious calculation, would never give *impulse* enough. How many things have been effected, which anything short of this enthusiasm would have deemed it folly to attempt. Think of Luther! I have lately read, with much interest, part of a recent French work, “Memoirs of Luther, written by himself.”\* The title is verified by the plan, which is that of selecting and putting in orderly series, the great numbers of passages in Luther’s books, letters, &c., which relate personally to himself, with only sometimes a few sentences by the editor to link them together. The effect of the work is that while the great reformer stands forth, in all his energy and intrepidity, there is manifested a sensibility, a softness and tenderness of feeling, which one would not have expected in so lion-like a piece of humanity. Who would have imagined him looking, with a gentle emotion, at a little bird in a tree? The good and noble fellow was sometimes, even after he was become so publicly conspicuous, so

\* *Mémoires de Luther, écrits par lui-même; traduits et mis en ordre par M. Michelet, professeur à l’école normale, chef de la section historique aux archives du royaume.*

poor that he could not afford himself a new coat, and tells how he was forced to pawn a silver goblet, which he happened to possess by inheritance, as his only article of value. When far on in his life and victorious success, his spirit sometimes drooped quite into melancholy at sight of the perversities, the refractoriness, the jars, the counteractions, and self-interested competitions, which arose among even the reformers. . . .

## CHAPTER IX.

LAST REVIEW—LETTER TO MR. GREAVES—VISIT TO BOURTON IN 1840—DEATH OF MR. COLES—VISIT TO LONDON IN 1841—ILLNESS—LAST VISIT TO BOURTON IN 1842—THE CHARTISTS AND THE ANTI-CORN-LAW LEAGUE—NATIONAL EDUCATION—LAST ILLNESS AND DEATH.

1839—1843.

MR. FOSTER closed his literary labors by an article on *Polack's New Zealand*, which appeared in the *Eclectic Review* for July, 1839.

In a letter to Mr. Greaves\* (April 25, 1840), to whom during his residence at Brearley he had stood in the twofold relation of friend and pupil, he reviews the circumstances of their early acquaintance and course in after-life. "What a width of time it is to look back over!—approaching to half a century. How far those youthful interests, those social scenes, those amicable colloquies, those little adventures, have receded away! How many with whom we were habitually or occasionally associated, have vanished from the world! How changed are we ourselves from what we were then! And then the reflection, not the less striking for being too self-evident almost to be put in words, that all these—can return no more!

"It would be interesting to me to have a long, quiet comparison and intercommunication with you, of our respective and mutual remembrances, seated alone by the nightly fire-side. Some of these recollections would be simply those of *fact*; some would

\* William Greaves, Esq., who subsequently removed to Clapham, where he died in the same week with Mr. Foster, was in early life classical tutor at Brearley, an office for which he was admirably fitted, both by his attainments as a scholar, and by all the higher moral qualifications required in an instructor of youth. "He was a singularly amiable man, full of benevolence and kind consideration for the wants and feelings of others. His heart was formed for friendship, and he had an acute discernment of what was proper in human conduct and the various relations of life. His taste was formed on the best models, and though not an author himself, he was ever ready to undertake all kinds of useful offices for his literary friends."

be invested with grave and pensive sentiment. And they would have the interest of being exclusive to ourselves, as the solitary occupants, so to speak, of a departed and far back tract of time; belonging to a period which none around us belonged to; the survivors of those who shared its interests with us, but share them no more. We should be something like two men left on a solitary shore by a wreck in which their companions had perished. We should feel to *belong* to the race who were then our co-evals, whatever subsequent interests and relations we have been involved in. You can in mere memory go back to those times and scenes, but can you recall the order of ideas and feelings in such manner as to reanimate them, as it were, for a transitory moment, so as to have a lively sense of what they were? For myself, I have very long lost any such power. A great difference will have been made in your case from mine, as to the continuity and prolongation of interest in the scene of our early life and its inhabitants, by your practice of rather frequently revisiting it. It is not, as to me, like an insulated territory, with a wide waste of sea between. Your disconnection from the social economy there (I mean our *early* associates) has been gradual, by the successive decease of one and another. And perhaps, in some certain degree they were replaced to you by those not of the *primeval* age. Whereas I have been nearly forty years (!) withdrawn totally from personal communication. I cannot exactly tell how it came to be so. My parents survived a considerable number of years after the time that I saw them last. But besides the immediate circumstances of my remote local situations, I felt a strong recoil at the thought of going to see them for absolutely a last time. I knew they were surrounded by kind friends, and sent them a little pecuniary assistance. I confess also that I feared lest I should witness a painfully sensible decline of mental faculties. I heard of the decease of one and another of the plain worthy persons (the Greenwoods, for instance, whom you will remember) to whom I had been partial. For our co-eval friend Fawcett, I felt invariably a most genuine esteem and regard. But progressive years were still bringing additional circumstances to diminish the inducements to a revisit of the place of my nativity. And always the thought that such a visit would be made with the consciousness it was to be the last. I may add, a great aversion to long tedious travelling; and also, that during a very considerable portion of the long period, I could ill spare the expense.

“Probably neither of our lives since that remote period of separation would furnish a long, varied, eventful history. It is strange to think how short a record would suffice for *my* seventy years, though a sojourn in a considerable variety of situations. Great and marked *changes for the better* would be the gratifying thing to tell of; but one’s *self*, one’s very self, is so sadly the same in every place, and through every stage;—the greater reproach as Providence has been faithfully kind. With some minor deductions I have been highly favored in respect to health, in point at least of exemption from painful and oppressive disorders; having never been confined one day to my bed in half a century, and having never in my life suffered from the headache. My eyes, indeed, have hardly been in a sound condition during the last forty years, but never so as to be long disabled for their valuable function, with the aid, for many years past, of strongly magnifying spectacles. I am, however, not without apprehension that their service cannot last with any long protraction of life. . . . In one point our experience has been parallel; each has possessed, through a long course of years, the blessing of an estimable and affectionate *wife*; and many years since each has lost it. But think what they have attained and enjoyed since they left us! Would we, if we might, recall them from their happy abodes? I have the same consolation respecting a son, who withered away when near the age of maturity, years before the decease of his mother. Your Mary’s amiable descendant, now branching out into — how many?—will contribute much, I have no doubt, to cheer your evening of life. To me are left two daughters. . . . Though within three miles of our great town, we live in extreme seclusion; having very few acquaintance, and almost nothing of what may be called visiting company, either here or in the town. I have long felt, and every year more, of disinclination to mixed society; and of the very diminutive number of more select individuals whom it was a pleasure to see, no less than three, of my own, or even a more advanced age, have died within less than the last year and a half; so fast and urgently are admonitions repeated; in addition and enforcement to those brought within the last two or three years in the very palpable signs and infirmities of old age. It is very far from likely that I am appointed (and how should it be desirable?) to make any near approach, I do not say to my father’s age, of nearly ninety—but even my mother’s—past eighty.



"On my already long life I look back with little complacency (except as to the goodness of divine Providence), rather, with heavy condemnation.\* Comparatively with what it might and should have been, it has been an indolent and profitless life,—of extremely slight intellectual discipline, very defective cultivation and advance of personal piety, and little faithful exertion to do good—a most powerful antidote to all pharisaism; from which, indeed, I do think I am wholly clear—and strange if I were not. But for that blessed refuge in the atonement of our Mediator I should be in utter despair. But *that*, Heaven be praised, is all-sufficient and alone.

"I named 'intellectual discipline;' I should be ashamed to write such a word as *study*; anything that ought to have answered to that name, has been, to the last degree, shallow and desultory. Not for want of copious aids, which should also have been excitements. For I have most foolishly accumulated books, to the amount of several thousand volumes, some of them of a costly order, and, collectively taken, at an expense which, with such limited means, I had no business to afford, and did not afford without often trenching on much more useful and necessary expenditures. And it would be most mortifying to me if, besides, I were to hear a true voice telling me how many of these same volumes have been *wholly* unread.

". . . . . My memory, never good, has become so miserably faithless that reading is of little use to me. Do *you* keep up your taste and habits in that way?

"My political and anti-hierarchical feelings and opinions have been but little modified by age. And their abatement is little likely to be a consequence of the present glaring manifestation of aristocratic arrogance and high-church intolerance. I meet with no thoughtful man who does not apprehend that the course of national affairs will after a while be precipitated to some fearful extremity or catastrophe.

"But, my dear friend, let me not seem to forget, that this is a communication between two persons who will soon have done

\* "Much as I am condemning men and mankind, I do really think that a larger portion of accusatory thought is directed on the evil at home than on that of all the rest of the world put together. Very often I am amazed and confounded to think how I can have lived so long to make such miserable attainments in plain, vital, practical Christianity, and to think how grievously, prodigiously difficult it is to subdue, or even reduce, any one, great or small, of the evil principles of this our evil nature."—*Mr. Foster to Dr. Stenson.*

with sublunary concerns. You are, I think, two or three years in advance of me. Both approaching the extreme verge. A few years more at the utmost, and where shall we be? Oh may our dwelling and our meeting be in a far better and happier economy; where already so many of our dear departed friends are exulting in a final, eternal escape from all evil; to which contemplative thought often tries to follow them. . . . But suffice it, that they are happy, and that we are invited to go and see, and to mingle our happiness with theirs. Earnest, assiduous preparation, then, is the solemn concern of this concluding portion of our life."

In the summer of 1840 Mr. Foster visited his friends at Bourton. Writing to Mr. Hill (June 30), he says, "There is nothing to tell you of here. I am in a most worthy and friendly family, and have been met with marks of pleasure by the remaining few of the good people with whom I was acquainted or intimate in a period of residence which ended something more than *twenty years since!* How few they are, and how changed in appearance! And doubtless I appear to them changed no less. I am not, I hope, unthankful to the good Providence that was indulgent to me when here, and has not deserted me during the long course of years since and elsewhere. But a review of my life—of myself—back through all these years, brings bitter reflections on the wretched deficiencies, neglects, and vanities, of a life that might have been (*might have been!*) wholly, earnestly, and delightfully devoted to God and Christ. My daily and almost hourly prayer is, 'God be merciful to me a sinner!' I do think that if there be any one thing that I am fully clear of, it is self-righteousness. I am sometimes almost afraid I shall err in praying so little against this, in consequence of feeling (as I think) so very absolute an extirpation of it from my mind."

In another letter to the same friend (July 9) he says, "I look with pensive, and not a little of painful emotion at the rooms I frequented, the house I inhabited, the rural walks which I trod, during a course of many years, since the end of which a much longer series has passed away. It was here I formed, and for a long time had the happiness of an union now many years since dissolved. But the pain of a more austere kind than that of *pensiveness* is from the reflection, to how little purpose, of the highest order, the long years here, and subsequently elsewhere, have been consumed away—how little sedulous and earnest cultivation of internal piety—how little even mental improvement—how little

of zealous devotement to God and Christ, and the best cause. Oh it is a grievous and sad reflection, and drives me to the great and only resource, to say, 'God be merciful to me a sinner.' I also most earnestly implore that in one way or other, what may remain of my life may be better, far better, than the long-protracted past. 'PAST!' What a solemn and almost tremendous word it is, when pronounced in the reference in which I am repeating it!

"After several weeks spent here, with a throwing aside of a cumbrous task or two which I was very desirous to work off my hands, I have the *horrid* business before me, as soon as there shall be a space of true summer weather, of going about what I have shrunk from, one year after another, all the while knowing it to be necessary, of making something like a clear *reformation* of my part of the house, which is infested with the dust, damp, book-worms, and chaos of all sorts of accumulation, of jumbled valuables and rubbish. . . . I must be in superintendence of the business myself, taking as small a part of the hard work as I can help. This ugly transaction will take, even with fine weather, several weeks, and by the time it is ended I shall very much want to sit down motionless and quiet, and also to try whether I can make some little use of the room for its proper business. How it ever is to be done, I do not venture yet even to imagine. It is a hard matter of *faith* that it can be done at all."

On his return to Stapleton he writes (July 24), "The Augean business here has not yet been entered on. Besides the shrinking horror, the weather has been untoward from wet and cold. If the present apparent promise of its 'taking up' shall prove true, I must force myself to the resolution (you know by what power), to make a beginning with the beginning of next week. . . . A few days since, as a very rare occurrence, I yielded to the solicitation of a curious literary acquaintance from Leicester, to have a look of inspection into the den, of which he said he had heard frightful reports, made on surmise. And though I assured him, in the way of preparation, that they could not, though made on conjecture, without actual knowledge, have exceeded the truth, he appeared fairly taken aback at the spectacle, and muttered; '*This is chaos indeed!*'"

Though all the assistance was given to Mr. Foster which he would allow, in this troublesome and fatiguing business, the ex-

ertions he made, together with the extreme sultriness of the season, obliged him for a time to remit it; and when accomplished, he found it necessary to have recourse to medical aid. It increased a morbid affection which he had experienced for the last two or three months, a kind of habitual dull heaviness, which was more annoying, and excited more apprehension, from his having been absolutely free from common headache during all his previous life; a circumstance rather remarkable in one whose time had been so devoted to literary labor, and who, in other ways, very sensibly felt the effects of it on his bodily frame.

Not long after his return home, he received the unexpected intelligence of the decease of his valued friend, the Rev. Thomas Coles, after a very short illness. "The sad event," he says,\* "comes with such a surprise that one seems hardly able to believe it a reality. To think how I saw him, evening after evening, but a few short weeks since! betraying no signs of the infirmities of age; vigorous, animated, and in various activity; a man for whom one was pleased to predict a physical and mental competence for his work, for towards twenty years to come. How strange and striking if, the last morning of being with him, at his cheerful breakfast, some secret prophetic intimation had come into my mind, that by the time I am now writing he would be silent, insensible, and waiting but a few hours to be conveyed to the grave! What a change it would have brought in the silent consciousness of the mind, over every look, and sentence, and tone of his voice! . . . To-morrow the pulpit will be beheld with a kind of dubious wandering sentiment, that will say, 'Will he really be seen there no more? Have there proceeded thence his final address and final prayer? Will every voice now to be heard there, be a memento that his, which has been heard these forty years, is now for ever silent, when there seemed every probability that it would continue to be heard, through many years to come, in which many of his hearers would be withdrawn from the congregation and from the living world, leaving him still in the exercise of his ministration?'

" . . . Mr. Coles was insinuating me a half request to be there [Bourton] at this very day, for the missionary meeting. What an astounding thing it would have been had there been any inspired seer to say, 'Mr. Coles, you will, at that time, be in an assembly *elsewhere*.' "

\* To Dr. Stenson, Sept., 1840.

In the summer of 1841 Mr. Foster spent several weeks with Mr. (now Sir John) Easthope and his family; part of the time was passed in the Isle of Wight.

In a letter dated July 17, he says, referring to his journey from Southampton, "A gentleman on the railway mentioned some remarkable antiquities dug up in cutting the road, and gave directions for them to be shown to me, and where I should find them. They are various pieces of ancient *British pottery*, some of them of forms not exactly, that I remember, described by Sir R. Hoare. They are chiefly basins and urns, large and small: a large urn containing human bones and a skull. The shape of some of them may be called elegant. They were found not very deep in the earth, and where there was no sign (tumulus or the like) on the surface. I am always interested by these primitive, or call them primeval antiquities."

This was the last time that he visited London. He was there for many weeks in the spring and summer of 1836, at the house of the same friend; and after his return often spoke in grateful terms of the kindness which he met with from every member of the family. On both occasions he devoted much of his time to the various exhibitions and works of art in the British Museum and elsewhere. "There is one unpleasant, almost mischievous effect," he remarks, "of seeing so many imposing or captivating ideal forms of humanity,—that it creates, or rather augments, a repulsion to human beings such as they are actually seen. To-day, for example, in seeing the numberless multitude, as they were passing backward and forward, or standing in ranks, one glanced at their countenances with a sort of recoil from each and almost all; not from the mere effect of their material cast, but also and very strongly from the apparent expression of character,—even of those who were evidently not of what we mean by the *vulgar*."

"In seeing such vast multitudes, one is often struck with the thought how each one is all-important to *individual self*, and, in most instances, considerably so to some other individuals; and yet how totally insignificant to all besides,—whether, or how, they live or die. What a consideration it is, that since I came hither, as many at least as three thousand have died in this city—all unknown and indifferent to me."

Near the end of December he was attacked with bronchitis, "a visitation" which, he remarked, "came as a very strange

one to a man who had not for fifty years been confined to bed a single day." He kept his room somewhere about two months. He manifested, throughout, the greatest patience ; and his letters, written when he became convalescent, disclose how anxiously he sought to derive spiritual improvement from the affliction : " I hope," he says,\* " this season of imprisonment has not been without a real advantage in respect to the highest concern. It has brought with it many grave, earnest, and painful reflections. The review of life has been solemnly condemnatory—such a sad deficiency of the *vitality* of religion, the devotional spirit, the love, the zeal, the fidelity of conscience. I have been really amazed to think how I could—I do not say, have been *content* with such a low and almost equivocal piety, for I never *have* been at all content—but, how I could have *endured* it, without my whole soul rising up against it, and calling vehemently on the almighty Helper to come to my rescue, and never ceasing till the blessed experience was attained. And then the sad burden of accumulated guilt ! and the solemn future ! and life so near the end ! Oh what dark despair but for that blessed light that shines from the Prince of Life, the only and the all-sufficient Deliverer from the second death. I have prayed earnestly for a genuine penitential, living faith on Him. Do you pray for me. Thus I hope this temporary experience of suspended health will have a salutary effect on the *soul's* health. I do not mean that these exercises of mind are a new thing, brought on by this visitation. They have grown upon me in this late declining stage of life. But for everything that enforces and augments them I have cause to be thankful. There is much work yet to be done in this most unworthy soul ; my sole reliance is on divine assistance ; and I do hope and earnestly trust (trust in that assistance itself) that every day I may yet have to stay on earth, will be employed as part of a period of persevering, and I almost say *passionate*, petitions for the divine mercy in Christ, and so continue to the last day and hour of life, if consciousness be then granted. . . . . Often I am making humbling comparisons between my lot, and that of the many ten thousand who are suffering at this time all the miseries of hopeless destitution. Why am I so favored, and millions so wretched ?" . . . .

Mr. Foster went to Bourton, for the last time, in the middle of September, 1842. He stayed about six weeks, and returned,

\* To the Rev. Josiah Hill, February, 1842.

looking rather stouter and apparently somewhat invigorated. He seemed to have enjoyed his visit very much,—to have been gratified by the cordial hospitality and kindness of his relations and old acquaintance, and to have felt much interest in wandering about his old haunts. In writing, while there, to one of his nephews, he thus adverts to the state of public affairs: “I suppose,”\* he says, “you have the pestilent Chartists in your part of the country. They are a very stupid and pernicious set; some of their leaders great rogues; the whole tribe a sad nuisance. They have done what they could to frustrate the exertions for obtaining the only public benefit which there is the smallest chance of getting at present, or for a long time to come; that is, an alteration or abrogation of the *Corn laws*, a thing which would immediately be a most important relief to that commercial interest on which so many tens of thousands are depending. And while they are doing this mischief, they are brawling about *universal suffrage*, a thing as much out of reach for a very long time to come, as anything they could dream of. And yet, unless they can get this, they say they will accept no other change for the amendment of their condition. What fools! And to judge of their recent proceedings, they are *themselves* wholly unfit for such a suffrage. What a fine and valuable thing the suffrage would be to men whose chosen business it has been to go and disturb, and break up with noise and violence, and abuse, the important meetings for discussing the best expedients for alleviating the public distress!—No, no; they have yet a great deal to learn before they will be fit for a considerate and judicious voting for members of the legislature. I wish the people *had* the Universal Suffrage, provided they were better educated, more intelligent, more sober, more moral; but not in their present state of ignorance and rudeness. Their being so, is, as to some of them, their own fault. But the main weight of the reproach falls on the government and the church, which have left the people in this deplorable condition from generation to generation. There ought to have been, long since, a general *national education*, which would have made sure of *all* being educated, in some decent measure,—as is the case in Prussia and some parts of Germany. But high statesmen and high churchmen have never, till a little lately, given themselves any concern about the matter.

“A sojourn in this village brings back many remembrances.

\* To Mr. John Foster, September 22, 1842.

What a change of the inhabitants! All the *then* old people vanished, and those who were in the vigor of middle life now withering into age,—and myself as much so as any of them. If I observe some of them stooping as they walk, my attention instantly turns on myself, and I perceive that I do so too, especially since the long and weakening disorder, which last winter confined me many weeks to my chamber, and several weeks to my bed. Within and without are the admonitions that life is hastening to a close. I endeavor to feel and live in conformity to this admonition; greatly dissatisfied with myself and my past life, and having and seeking no ground of hope for hereafter, but solely the all-sufficient merits and atonement of our Lord and Saviour. If that great cause of faith and hope were taken away, I should have nothing left.”

In another letter, of rather later date, he refers again to the same topics. “It must have been a most harassing time for you all,” he says,\* “when you had those late tumults about you. The tumults and outrages will subside, from the conviction and experience that no good can come of them, but much evil, aggravating the evil there was already. But though the violence will be put down, the spirit, the resentment, and the sense of oppression and injustice, in the state of the people, must remain, and increase, till some great change shall come at length, but not soon. One is astonished at the stockish stupidity of those *Chartists*, if they really did and do dream of obtaining what they demand in their charter. It is impossible but some of the bad men who have been exciting them, and making their own base advantage of them, must know better. Till the times, the nation, and themselves shall have vastly changed, they might as well think of going to the moon. They have greatly damaged the whole cause of reform, by setting the middle as well as the higher ranks more against them than they were before. Nothing could be more mad and mischievous than their proceedings respecting the great question of the corn laws. Besides the extravagance of some of their demands, their irreligious and profligate character has made them detested, and would make them feared if they had any real power. As to their power, do they not see how impotent they would be, whatever were their numbers, against a large disciplined *military force*, of which fifty thousand would soon be brought into action if there were any occasion for it? There is no chance for the

\* To Mr. John Foster, October 1, 1842.



'popular rights,' till the people become better educated and more morally respectable. And I fear their chance for better education is but small, since the aristocracy and the church have very little disposition to promote that important object."

About Christmas, Mr. Foster had one or two attacks of spitting of blood, and again about the middle of January, 1843. These attacks did not confine him at all to his bed or to his room, but obliged him to be very careful, and to remain in the house for many weeks. As the milder weather came on, he ventured out again, and did not seem in a very perceptibly different state from what he had been in during the previous summer. He was somewhat thinner and more languid—less disposed and less able to move about. His cough also was often very troublesome.

He continued to manifest a deep interest in public affairs, especially the great question of national education; so intense was his anxiety that some measure should be taken to raise the mass of the people, that he would have acquiesced in a measure that would have substantially effected this object, even though accompanied with restrictions inconsistent with what he deemed a just and enlightened policy. "As to the *education* project," he says,\* "the probability seems to be that it will wholly fall to the ground, so that our rising race of savages and pagans will continue to grow up in the hideous condition which has been so frightfully brought to view. For the almost universal remonstrance of the Nonconformists *must* have a great effect to deter the ministry from persisting in the bill as it stands; and there is small chance that the church arrogance will permit any conciliatory modification. Horrid bad either way; on the one hand, indefinitely prolonged and increasing barbarism, and on the other, the hateful and intolerable domination of the established church. The Methodist folk are going too far, in declaring against the bill absolutely and altogether, whereas the case is so alarmingly urgent, that if such modifications as those proposed by Lord J. Russell, or even the most material part of them, were admitted, one would, however reluctantly, and with a feeling of submitting to some injustice, make considerable concessions, in order that the wretched populace might have a certainty of getting *some* good in the way of cultivation, rather than be consigned, downright and hopelessly, to the great pestilent swamp of ignorance and barbarism. What a tale is told of our opulent and powerful church and state by the

\* To the Rev. Josiah Hill, April 21, 1843.

present mental and moral condition of the million! What a fearful account elsewhere they—that is, the persons and classes of chief authority and ability—have gone to render. One sometimes feels the rising of an impatient indignation which is ready to transgress the great law of piety, by asking, in a temper which requires to be repressed, ‘Why does the supreme Governor permit such a course of things?’”

Mr. Foster regarded very favorably the Prussian system of education; and on its being represented to him by a friend that from the accounts of Mr. Laing and others, it appeared that the plan was open to grave objections—that the restrictions imposed by it on the individual will, checked the generous growth of the moral sentiments, and induced laxity in the domestic relations—he manifested surprise and disappointment.\*

The last time of his appearing on any public occasion was in June, 1843, at the annual meeting of the Bristol Baptist College, when he attended, as he had been wont for many preceding years, the theological examination. This proof of his undiminished attachment to the Institution was entirely spontaneous, for, much as his presence on these occasions was valued, the failing state of his health quite forbade the expectation of being favored with it. During the period of his final residence in the neighborhood of Bristol, he had been a member of the Committee, and had taken the most lively interest in its transactions; particularly on any important emergencies, as at the decease of the president Dr. Ryland, in 1825, when arrangements were made for a more efficient system of education, in order to meet the general progress of society and the exigencies of the denomination. In 1823, he wrote an address on behalf of the College, and furnished the most important paragraphs in the annual reports for 1826 and 1838.†

\* *Vide* Notes of a Traveller on the Social and Political State of France, Russia, Switzerland, Italy, and other parts of Europe, during the present century, by Samuel Laing, Esq., 2d edit., 1842, ch. 6, 7, and 8.

† “We may presume that not many persons in our denomination to whom we might apply, would plainly say they do not wish the Institution to be supported and prosperous; that they do not care what its situation may be. . . . Nor will they say they are indifferent as to the intellectual qualifications of the men who are to be public instructors; that an illiterate or slenderly cultivated preacher will do as well, provided he possess piety and zeal, as another, who shall combine with these essential qualifications the advantage of a mind regularly disciplined to the exercise of thinking, and the acquirement of valuable knowledge. We sometimes hear them saying, with respect to one or other of the less cultivated preachers (whose labors, however, when their situation has denied them the time and means for adequately supplying the deficiency, we do not undervalue) ‘what an

Towards September all the unfavorable symptoms became much aggravated. "The three years that I am in advance of you," he writes to Mr. Hill (Aug. 31), have brought on me the most urgent mementos of mortality. Within less than two years, two very protracted seasons of very great prostration, resulting in a settled

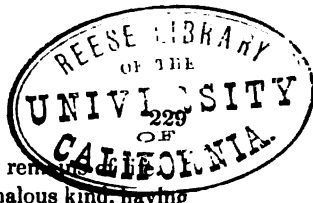
excellent preacher he would have been, if he had enjoyed the advantage of a good education!" They profess to be sorry for the difference between what he is, and what he might have been; between the measure of good he is able to do now, and that which he might have effected if competently trained. And will they refuse the necessary means of obviating just that difference in the case of young men of piety and promising ability, willing to devote themselves to the service?

"While solicitous to have their children well educated, they would deem it absolutely a calamity that their families should grow up in attendance on a ministry unqualified to convey religious instruction in a manner that should command respect; unadapted to enlighten, convince, and persuade. How would they like to have the task, after each service, of pleading, to the sharper of their young people (whose first essays of criticism are sure to have the preacher for the subject) for candor to his literary and mental deficiencies; of excusing the inaccuracies of his language, helping out the lameness of his argument; and urging (alas! vainly urging) that religion is not the less true and important for the incompetence of its advocate? And surely they would wish that families everywhere should be saved from an evil which they would so deprecate for their own.

"But the pleading is not the less valid, if we turn from this supposed order of hearers to the very uncultivated portion which must make a large part of most of our congregations; and which it is in the highest degree desirable to draw thither in increasing numbers. *No mistake is more gross than that of imagining that undisciplined teachers are the fittest to deal with ignorance and mental rudeness.* On the contrary, to force the rays of thought intelligibly through so opaque a medium, demands peculiarly and emphatically a great clearness and prominence of thinking, and an exact feeling of the effect of words, as to be chosen, combined, and varied.

"The character of the age we live in is a frequent topic of our discourse. We are all saying, What a wonderful movement in the general mind; what an awakened start from the monotony of our forefathers' life; what an amazing development of the powers of science to wield the powers of nature; what an impetus and acceleration of human action; what a creation of means for the diffusion of knowledge; what signs, surely, of some grand approaching change! We look on this great improvement and exclaim, taking credit for pious zeal while we are exclaiming, 'Oh that the cause of Religion were, through every section of it, in equally energetic forward impulse in our land!' But there should be some voice at hand, to name to us a certain article, which is supplied in immense profusion to empower those other mighty agencies; and but for which the bold experiments, the engines, the railroads, the improved processes, the compelling of rude substances to valuable uses, the printing presses, the myriads of laborers, would be all at a stand.

"To this suggestion will the man who was professing his desire for the accelerated progress of the Christian agency reply, that those other enterprises have the captivating recommendation, that the expenditure of money is expected to *return* in money to the expenders; whereas, in a case like ours, unfortunately, the expenditure would give no return other than that of some time, in some degree, making some men wiser, better, and happier? Is it an insignificant promise, 'Thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just?'"—*Report*, 1838.



debility, which will continue through whatever remedy we have the great grievance of a cough, of an anomalous kind, having apparently nothing to do with the chest, but caused by a local irritation somewhere at the bottom of the throat. No medicaments take any effect on it. Of a dozen things tried, *laudanum* is the only one to which it yields. An unwelcome resource, which I use as sparingly as I can; for I feel it has an unpleasant effect on the head."

In his last letter to the same friend, of rather later date (Sept. 18), he says, "This is a grand missionary week in our town; of which I shall not see a particle, or hear a sentence. I shall not be called on by any of them; it being understood that I cannot *work a conversation*,\* talking being sure to irritate a very injurious cough. On this account, last evening, I sent away without seeing him the person whom, at all times, I am more pleased to see than any one else from the town. I fancy some little abatement of the extreme debility. Any material amendment will be slow; as to *recovery*, in any moderate or ordinary sense of the word, I never think of it. It may be that life may last on two or three lingering years; as the constitution, radically, is of the sounder order, and *very* sound till within the last two years. But my business is, to be looking habitually to the *end*, and making all serious preparation for it, under such constant strong admonition. In considering, a day or two since, the balance of good and evil of this last year and more, I hoped I could say, *I am a gainer* by the salutary effects I hope I have reaped from this discipline. I never

\* "*Work a conversation.*" This expression may be illustrated by an extract from a letter to Mr. Hill, written about 1819—"You mentioned some expectation of seeing B— in Wales. Now in good truth, my dear sir, if I knew at *what time*, I would make some arrangement or other that should authorize me to say that I could not possibly visit you at *that time*. In my present state of debility, I feel an absolute horror of the necessity of long laborious *talks*, such as would be inevitable to a constant association with a man like him—a thorough college man, hard disciplined, doggedly literary, and nearly a stranger. One day of it (I know by experience) would do me more mischief than a week's idleness would undo. With *you* the case is quite different;—we are old acquaintances,—there is no obligation of ceremony,—we can talk just about what we like,—read Walter Scott,—be under no necessity of mental exertion, but just as far as we find it agreeable,—debate with the young ones,—ramble hither and thither (that is, when you are not engaged),—in short, be always at our ease; anything more formal, more laborious, and more continued than this, miserably jades me. It would be as bad as having to preach every day. I admire B—'s intelligence and attainments, but his being such, *unless he were an old familiar*, would render prolonged conversation with him a kind of *college exercise*, of which, to repeat the word, my state of health gives me the utmost horror."

prayed more earnestly, nor probably with such faithful frequency. '*Pray without ceasing*' has been the sentence repeating itself in the silent thought; and I am sure, I think, that it will, that it *must*, be my practice to the last conscious hour of life. Oh! why not throughout that long, indolent, inanimate half-century past! I often think mournfully of the difference it would have made now, when there remains so little time for a more genuine, effective, spiritual life. What would become of a poor sinful soul, but for that blessed, all-comprehensive sacrifice, and that intercession at the right hand of the Majesty on high?"

On the 24th of September he took to his room, which he never again left. There exists no doubt that his lungs had been diseased for many years. With very rare and slight exceptions, he betrayed none of the irritability so generally attendant upon the disease. The religious remarks and admonitions addressed to those around him were deeply interesting and affecting; but it was not often that his cough and *extreme* weakness allowed him to say much. On one occasion, however, he spoke at great length on "the duty of earnest, persevering, importunate prayer;" and at another time, on the absolute necessity of casting ourselves on the mercy of God in Christ Jesus, concluding in the following words: "We can do nothing in our own strength; we must look to Jesus—our only Mediator—our only Redeemer—our only hope." But no exhortations could have been half so impressive as the uniform patience he displayed, and the self-condemnatory remarks he often made, indicating a profound feeling of the evil of sin.

One evening, when he appeared very much exhausted, it was remarked, "You are very languid to-night." "Yes," he replied, "I shall languish out of this mortal life some time not long hence." On being told of the frequent kind inquiries made for him by friends in the neighborhood, he said, "To all inquiries it's always the same answer, and the last will be the best of all." On the sabbath previous to his death, while a friend was reading to him one of Doddridge's Sermons, he fell asleep; on awaking, he said in a tone very expressive of a grateful feeling, "'Tis a thankless office to read to sleepy people."

In the earlier stages of his illness he was very much in the habit of speaking of the value of time, and sometimes quoted Young's lines on the subject. Another frequent topic of conversation was the separate state. After the death of any friend, he

seemed impatient to be made acquainted with the secrets of the invisible world.\* On one occasion of this kind (rather more than a twelvemonth before his own decease), he exclaimed, "They don't come back to tell us!" and then, after a short silence, emphatically striking his hand upon the table, he added, with a look of intense seriousness, "But we shall know *some time*!"

He sat up for a few hours almost daily till the day before his death. Towards the latter part of the time he often expressed a wish to be left alone for a little while, saying, that there was much he ought to think of, and that in a state of great debility it was a difficult thing to think.

During the whole course of his illness he showed the greatest consideration for the servants and all about him, and was as anxious to give them as little trouble as possible. He never allowed any one to sit up, even for part of the night—he would not listen to such a proposal, and when urged would say, that it would so annoy him as to prevent his sleeping.

Speaking of his weakness to one of his two servants who had lived with him for about thirty years, he mentioned some things which he had not strength to perform; and then added, "But I can pray, and that is a glorious thing." On another occasion he said to his attendant, "Trust in Christ—trust in Christ." At another time, the servant heard him repeating to himself the words, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ."

On October 3d he wrote to Sir J. Easthope, and stated that he had no expectation of surviving more than a very few months, but though he felt unequal to the exertion of a personal interview, he "would not yet say Farewell." Two days later, however, his debility had increased so rapidly, that he limited his expectations

\* "The nearer I approach by advancing age to the grand experiment, the more inquisitive—I might almost say, restlessly inquisitive,—I become respecting that other scene and state of our existence. . . . The wonder is, after all, and the self-reproach too, there should be a difficulty to keep the mind in a state of earnest *preparation* for making, as our friend expressed it, 'the grand and final journey.' . . . Still another surprise (but truly the uncertainty of life, under almost any circumstances, *should* not surprise us) was caused me by the information of the decease of Mr. G.'s daughter; no other, I believe, than the pleasing young lady who took my arm in walking to the music-meeting at the cathedral. How little did I think of her, in that blooming youth, as bearing the fatal mark of an appointment to be so prematurely withdrawn from life. If that had been a *visible* mark, what an emotion would have been excited in looking at my companion!"—*Mr. Foster to Mrs. Stokes, June 14, 1839.*

of prolonged life to only a few days, and ended his last letter to the same friend with the words, "I commend you to the God of mercy, and very affectionately bid you—*Farewell.*"

His family were much struck by the perfect dignity and composure with which, as soon as he relinquished all hope of even a partial recovery, he resigned himself to the divine appointment.

On Saturday, October 14, the day before his death, he complained of feeling some confusedness in his head, and was much oppressed in his breathing; he was therefore obliged to desist that day from his usual practice of hearing some one read to him,\* and finding it very difficult to converse, he requested to be left quite alone during the afternoon and evening. This desire was complied with; some of his family going occasionally into his room, but so as not to disturb him, till the usual hour of retiring to rest; they then particularly requested that some one might be allowed to sit up with him through the night. This, however, he steadily refused, though in consequence of a long continued fit of coughing he was in a state of greater exhaustion than usual. The kind old servant who attended upon him, from an apprehension lest she should disturb him, did not go at all into his room in the course of that night, as she had been in the habit of doing every night for the past fortnight. But towards four o'clock she went to the door of his room to listen, and being satisfied from the sound she heard that he was sleeping, returned without going in. At about six o'clock she went again to the door, and this time hearing no sound, she went in, and found that he had expired. His arms were gently extended, and his countenance was as tranquil as that of a person in a peaceful sleep. Death had taken place but a very short time, for only the forehead was cold.

On the following Saturday his remains were laid in the grave, which just seventeen years before had been opened to receive those of his son, in the burial ground belonging to the chapel at Downend, where he formerly preached.

\* One of the last works read to him was a sermon by Dr. Doddridge, on "the incapacity of an unregenerate soul for relishing the enjoyments of the heavenly world." He was so much struck with this sermon that he desired his daughters to promise him they would read it every month, saying that he thought no one could read it often without a salutary effect. During the last two or three days of his life, the Scriptures (chiefly the Psalms) were by his own desire exclusively read to him.

## LETTERS.

CCXII. TO MRS. STOKES.

[On the death of Mr. Stokes.]

*Stapleton, Feb. 20, 1839.*

MY DEAR OLD FRIEND,—For how truly I may name you so, when I am looking back over a period of nearly thirty years, that have passed away since I was first received in your house, with all the kindness of yourself, and of him who was then your companion there ; and during which there has been a succession of times and scenes which we have all three happily enjoyed together.

Within the last two months, one of these, and then another, and another, has been brought back in lively images to my memory, with an interest in which a painful sentiment has deeply mingled with that of pleasure. Pleasing events and experiences which are long past and gone, bring a pensiveness in the reflection itself that they *are* past and irrevocable.

This feeling, however, can be somewhat relieved so long as there remain the possibility and the means of renewing the pleasure, and being happy again in the same manner from the same causes. But when the final withdrawal of one indispensable participator of these pleasures has taken away that possibility, the remembrance of them is accompanied by a very mournful sentiment. It is with a melancholy emotion that we say, "With *him* I can behold those scenes, converse on those subjects, share the social animation—no more. Often I have in imagination placed myself in some delightful spot or stage in North Wales, and thought how I should feel if I were to be there again ; what a strong and mournful admonition there would be of the absence of our friend ; how memory would interfere to preclude the pleasure ; how every object adapted in itself to inspire delight, would remind me of something that was fatally wanting. And in the more quiet situations, in the domestic intercourse or the social party, the silent thought (while every friend was contributing to the pleasure), the thought would be, "Where is *his* intelligent and friendly countenance and animated voice ?"

You will often have felt a momentary prompting to look at a part of the room, or at a chair, where he used more commonly to sit ; to see the door opening into your apartment with a feeling as if it should be *he* that is coming in ; to look at and handle some article of his apparel, or some implement of his familiar use, or some favorite book, with a sentiment that almost says, "Is it absolutely true that he has used this for the last time ?"

Among the feelings caused by the loss of domestic friends, few things have in my own case been more striking than the impression of their



absolute and *entire* surrender of the things that specially and individually belonged to them. This or that was his or hers, peculiarly and personally so ; perhaps a favorite article ; but they make no claim to it now ; it is totally yielded up ; let go, absolutely and for ever ; it is now a thing infinitely indifferent to the person who called it " mine ;" it may be taken by any person or for any use. The late proprietor wants it no longer, knows it no more.

No doubt the real principle of the pensive emotion excited by this surrender and relinquishment is, that it tells us, in this secondary manner of evidence, that he has also quitted us ; has withdrawn his claims upon us, and has ceased to interfere with our concerns and proceedings.

Yet it will often occur as an idea nowise irrational or improbable, that perhaps the loved and departed friend, in what is, as to our perceptions, an absence entire and absolute, may not really have become a stranger. I have often thought it highly probable that the departed friends who took a warm and faithful interest may do so still. A benevolent remembrance of us they *necessarily* have. But why not much more than that ? Why should it appear improbable that they have the means of being apprised of our situation and conduct, and even our feelings ; and that they maintain in a continuance, a friendly interest for us ; watching, as it were, our progress toward the appointed moment of our passing after them through death ? Some good and wise men have even maintained it as not improbable that they may be employed in kind offices for their pious survivors, in humbler co-operation with angelic agents. We cannot know it ; but we may be allowed to indulge a pleasing and consolatory idea which contradicts no principle of reason and doctrine of revelation. At the very least we may feel confidently assured that they retain us so much in mind as to feel a lively interest in our final welfare, and in the anticipation of our transition to their society. The day of resurrection is to be looked forward to as the consummation of the felicity of the followers of Christ. But that event must certainly be far distant ; and I sometimes wonder that religious teachers advert so little in any distinct terms to the state immediately after death, which inspiration has so expressly asserted to be a state of consciousness, and of happiness to faithful souls.

It is true (and it appears to me one of the most mysterious things in the economy of the divine government), that the information afforded us by revelation on this subject is extremely limited. But assume only that the state of good men immediately after death is a state of consciousness, of deliverance from all the ills of mortality, and above all from *sin*, and then what a grand series of felicities they have in prospect *before* the resurrection which is yet at the distance of many ages, possibly of thousands of years. Their close vicinity to that state, on which they are to enter, after a few years at all events, and many of them in a much shorter time, may well bring the subject and the anticipation to press with a more *immediate* interest than even the resurrection itself. How

short a time comparatively, at the most, you will have to wait for the call to rejoin the friend who is gone before you. How near, how very near, he was to the other world and the other life, when he wrote his last letter to me, in which he made so striking a reference to the "grand and final journey,"\* being then not more, I think, than about *eight weeks*—eight little weeks! from his departure to the other world. Oh what an emphasis of interest if he could have known how near he was! But he needed not this knowledge as a *warning*; he had taken the solemn warning long, long before, and sought to be in a habitual preparation. Let us, unknowing where, in the dark distance before us, is the appointed hour, let us earnestly do the same.

You, my dear friend, do not need to be instructed in the topics which are available for both consolation and admonition. Your own thoughts remind you that, estimable as was the friend who had been called away, and deserving of a warm affection while present, and still when now absent, there is yet one being, the supreme Friend, who claims a still more devoted affection, and that the affection due to him, infinitely due, includes submission, acquiescence, resignation; and even an *approbation* of his proceedings. You know that he can, by an increased sense of his favor, make a compensation for what he takes away, and that his throne of mercy is constantly accessible to the petitioner for that blessing, and that there is an all-powerful Intercessor there. You are reminded that a Christian is not "to sorrow as those that have no hope." You are aware that life, while continued to you, has still its duties, which are incompatible with a yielding up of the mind to "be swallowed up of overmuch sorrow." Affection for the friend who has been withdrawn from you, in order to be what it should be, will include a grateful pleasure in thinking what he has gained by the removal. You have to consider also through what a very long period you *have* possessed, what is now, wisely and for the best beyond all doubt, withdrawn from you. Gratitude for that should not be lost in present sorrow. True indeed, the having lost a blessing long enjoyed, might be lamented with bitterness almost unmingled, if there were nothing in prospect, if the loss were total and final. But how different is your anticipation of hereafter; and this difference should have its effect; it *claims* to have its effect, in counter-acting the sorrow. Time also, though you may as yet hardly be able to believe it, *will*, by degrees, have a softening influence. And meanwhile it is highly desirable that you should have the resolution to resume somewhat of the *activities* of life, and of the former social habits, as

\* "But should these pleasing anticipations be suspended, by any one or more of us being called away on *that grand and final journey* from the world, for which we were all sent into it, may that event prove to those who depart, rather a glorious compensation for, than disappointment of, whatever pleasures we had been promising ourselves here, and an efficient incitement to those left behind more diligently and ardently to seek and insure their interest in the solid and permanent enjoyment of those sublime scenes and that exalted companionship."—*Mr. Stokes to Mr. Foster.*

far as the circumstances of your situation may admit, or may supply occasions.

. . . You will well believe that I set a very special value on the box which you so kindly gave as a token for the remembrance of our departed friend. How often and how many years it has served as a kind of medium of pleasant communication between us.

The flowers will soon appear in your garden. I fear they will not appear quite so beautiful and cheerful as they were wont to do. But still I hope the reviving spring will not have lost all its attractions. A poet has said mournfully, that no spring returns to *man*. But this is not true of pious men. The case is only, that "it is a spring season long deferred." But it is in reserve, and will come at last.

My dear friend, you will believe with what sincerity and sympathy,

I am,

Yours, very faithfully,

J. FOSTER.

CXXIII. TO THE REV. F. CLOWES.

[On the Intermediate State.]

June 23, 1839.

MY DEAR SIR,—Allow me to apologize for not having long since acknowledged your letter, and attempted something in the way of answer. But truly I have much more need to ask for, than competence to offer, anything to be called opinions on the interesting subject of which you write.

It would seem that the generality of our fellow-Christians are content to *have* no such opinions. Reposing on an indistinct idea, on an idea formed on common figures and analogies, of heaven, and going to heaven, they are exempt from any restless curiosity about an intermediate state. This does appear somewhat strange, when it is considered how very distinct a state there must be from that which is to follow the resurrection and the final judgment; when it is considered, too, that while the latter is at a vast distance (as *we* measure time), a few years at the most, possibly, as to some of us, but a few months, or even days, lie between us and the next stage of our existence. What we shall behold, and shall be, *so very soon*, is surely a matter of mighty interest.

From the consideration of its close approach, almost, if I may so express it, to *contact* with so advanced an age as mine, it has often an ascendancy in my thoughts over the ultimate state beheld in such remoteness of prospect.

I assume with entire confidence the soul's consciousness after death; this is *implied* in many passages of Scripture; but a number of them (often cited) assert it in so plain a manner, that nothing but the most resolute perversity of criticism can attempt to invalidate them.

But it often appears to me one of the dark things in the divine govern-

ment that revelation, considered as intended to *impress and influence* our minds, as well as to inform them, in regard to our concern with hereafter, should have limited the communication to so very narrow an extent beyond the mere fact. It is true that solemn *mystery* has an imposing effect on minds habitually contemplative, or occasionally excited to earnest thought. But still what is so *very* mysterious, so much of the element of darkness as not even to shadow out any defined images, frustrating the attempt to descry or shape them, is apt to make but a transitory impression—an impression much depending on the *mood* of the mind, since there are no distinct forms to become fixed and abiding in the understanding.

It is probable that some circumstances of the invisible economy may be of such a nature, as little in analogy with anything within our present experience, or knowledge, that they could not be conveyed intelligibly in the language of this world. But there might be presented plainly to our understanding through that medium, by a messenger from the other world, many things on which a thoughtful spirit would, if permitted, solicit a communication from such a messenger. If we might be allowed to imagine such an exception to a general law as a brief visit from a departed friend, with permission of making to us some disclosures of the unseen economy, an earnest inquisitiveness heretofore indulged in vain, might prompt such inquiries as the following :

Where is it—in what realm of the creation—and have you an abode fixed to one locality ? Do you exist as an absolutely unembodied spirit : or have you some material vehicle, and if so, of what nature ? In what manner was it at your entrance *verified* to you that you were in another world, and with what emotion ? Was an angel your conductor ? How does the strange phenomenon, *Death*, appear to you, now that you *look back* upon it ? What thought or feeling have you respecting your deserted body ? What is your mode of perceiving external existence, and to what extent does that perception reach ? Do you retain a vivid and comprehensive remembrance of the world and the life which you have quitted ? Are you associated with the friends who preceded you in death ? What is the manner of intercommunication ? What are specially your employments ? What account do you take of time ? What new manner of manifestation of the divine presence ? Is there a *personal* manifestation of Jesus Christ ? Have you a sense, a faculty, to perceive angels as personal objects, analogously to what we should here call a visible appearance ? Are you admitted to any personal knowledge of the wise and good of ancient times ? Is there an assignment into *classes* ? Do the newly arrived acquire immediately an adaptation to the amazing change ? Do you still take a peculiar interest for those who were dear to you, whom you left behind ? Have you any intimation how long it will be before they follow ? Are you apprised continuously of much, or of anything, that is taking place on earth ; if so by what means, and with what feelings ? Have you any appointed intervention

in the affairs of this world ? Is the awful mystery of the divine government of this world in any degree cleared up to your view ? Is the great intellectual superiority which some have possessed on earth maintained in the other world ? Is there a continual progress in knowledge ; if so, must not those who have been in the spiritual world centuries, or thousands of years, be so immensely in advance of those recently entering as to be almost humiliating to the latter ? In what manner is the *retributive* designation signified ?—is it by any formal judicial act, or only by a deep internal consciousness ? Is the separation so wide between the good and evil that no distinct information of the condition of the one is conveyed to the other ? Or are they so mutually apprised as our Lord's parable of Dives and Lazarus would seem to intimate ? How is maintained your complacency in the appointment to wait an indefinite, but certainly very, very long period, before the attainment of complete and ultimate happiness ?

Such inquiries (thus noted without sequence or order) will sometimes be started in meditative thought, and most of them could be intelligibly answered by the supposed visitant, bringing the experience of the other world. That which would be the intelligible answer, that is, the statement of the truth, the fact, *might* have been, or the most important of them, communicated by revelation. And, *à priori*, it might have been conceived that such knowledge, in a certain selection and measure, would be a highly proper and almost necessary part of a revelation to beings so profoundly interested in the subject, and at the same time needing the utmost force of impression to secure their due attention to it.

Why, then, did Revelation, while answering in the affirmative the question,—Is there a conscious state after Death ? withhold an answer to those inquiries, which would solicit some knowledge of *the manner and circumstances of it* ?

Necessarily we are convinced that this silence is *for the best* : but perhaps not in the same sense which the words would at first view seem to import ; namely, that the withholding of the information is more conducive to our spiritual interest than the communication of it would have been. For the best it *must* be, in the sense, that it is in conformity with the laws by which infinite wisdom and justice govern the world. But, as a depraved race, we are placed under a *punitive* dispensation ; a part of which is, that many things which would be for our good, even our spiritual good, are withheld.

*Divine grace itself*, the supreme good, the *sine quâ non*, to man, of happy existence here and hereafter, while not conferred at all on the vast majority, why so *partially* conferred, on those who do receive a measure of it ? As an ampler communication of it would be unspeakably beneficial, the restriction must be because a sinful race are doomed *not* to receive what would be most for their good. It may be by the same rule, that we are denied such a knowledge of the invisible world, as would

have tended to make the prospect of that world more influentially impressive. And it is difficult to avoid thinking that a few of the special facts of that world, revealed discernably through the solemn mystery, so discernably as to bear an evident character of reality, though not presented with an unshaded, palpable, prominent, distinctness, detached wholly from the mystery of the scene—might and would contribute to keep our minds directed, and under a graver impression, to that region which it infinitely imports us to be preparing to enter. That such a disclosure is not made, may therefore be deemed a part of the punitive economy.

It is not forgotten that our Lord has said, "Neither would they believe though one rose from the dead." But it does not seem necessary to understand this declaration as regarding more than a strong conviction of the general fact of a future state of retribution; the evidence for which is assumed to be so sufficient, that the rejection of it betrays a state of mind on which any corroborative evidence would equally be lost.

It would not be a fair inference from this, that to minds fully convinced of that great truth, and thoughtful concerning it, some more special information would be useless. Even as to the case put by our Lord, it is not said that a visit of one from the dead would not be a corroborative, and might not be a valuable circumstance of evidence, but that it would be, with all the other evidence, *unavailing to minds of such infidel hardness.*

But that mysterious hereafter! We must submit to feel that we *are* in the dark; and have to walk by faith in the mere general fact, of a conscious and retributive state immediately after death; revealed without definitions, illustrations, expansion into a field of varieties and specific forms. Still a contemplative spirit hovers with insuppressible inquisitiveness about the dark frontier, beyond which it *knows* that wonderful realities are existing, realities of greater importance to it than the whole world on this side of that limit. We watch for some glimmer through any part of the solemn shade; but still are left to the faint, dubious resources of analogy, imagination, and conjecture; and are never satisfied with any attempt at a defined conception shaped by other minds or our own. If it be a conception indistinct, and variable, and, so to speak, merely elemental, it does not take strong hold of the imagination; if it be reduced to a decided and specific delineation, it comes, almost inevitably, into so near an analogy to our terrestrial condition, that the mind recoils from it, both as being of too familiar and homely an aspect, and as being essentially improbable, when we reflect what a mighty difference there *must* be in the mode and perhaps the scene of existence, between the present state, and that of a disembodied spirit. How changed must be the nature of our relations when we have passed away from under all known laws of the material world, and are received into the spiritual system? The mind has not, therefore, the power to *accept* a scheme which would figure its new mode of existence in close analogy to the present. This is felt in reading Mr. Sheppard's very ingenious, and in many parts beautiful

ideal creation in his "AUTUMN DREAM."\* It is an imagery very pleasing to look upon; but there is still a sentiment which prompts to say, No; it is too much like this terrestrial place and state where we are; it is a poetical *refinement* rather than an *essential change*; my mind *cannot* yield itself; though unable to dream a fairer vision; indeed it could not dream a vision to which it would or could yield itself content that such should be the reality—of which it would say complacently "let it be so."

We wish to take what advantage we can of the few intimations afforded by revelation. "Paradise;" "Abraham's bosom;" being "with Christ;" "present with the Lord."

I suppose there is an agreement of learned men that among the ancient Jews, and subsequently the early Christians, the term Paradise designated the happy part of the invisible world—the *Hades* to which departing spirits are conveyed—and that it must have been employed by our Lord and St. Paul in that sense.

It must be a *place*; the existing spirit exists *somewhere*; but whether within even our mundane (solar) system, there can be no surmise, but this—that it would hardly seem probable that the spirit should be removed indefinitely far from the world to which it has belonged but a moment before, and which is the old place of sojourn of the order of beings to which it is still inseparably related. And yet what world in our system, under the same physical laws, by the testimony of science as our own, can be conceived to have any peculiar fitness for the receptacle and abode of *spirits*? One ingenious speculator will have the appointed place to be the sun. In the indulgence of imagination one would, certainly, have less *objection* to that sublime luminary, than to any of his inferiors; but how arbitrary must be any such conjecture; and what should be the *peculiar fitness*?

The transfer of the attractive denomination, Paradise, seems to affirm such an analogy as will authorize our assurance, that it is as delightful to the dwellers there as the terrestrial paradise was to man in innocence. And the region and the inhabitants must have as direct an adaptation to each other, as the garden of Eden had to the *compound* constitution of man, soul and *body*. But what a strangely different *mode* of adaptation. For how can the phenomena and properties of *place* be adapted to disembodied spirits? If we suppose the place to be rich in the characters of sublimity and beauty, and all other physical qualities, displayed in *material* elements and aspects, such as could be taken cognizance of by means of organs of sense like ours, how can they be apprehended by spirits divested of them? And yet we cannot think, either that a place presented to us under the name and image of Paradise can be without some such fair attributes, or that they can be lost on the perceptions of the disembodied spirits happily located there. We cannot conceive

\* AN AUTUMN DREAM: Thoughts in Verse, on the Intermediate State of Happy Spirits, &c., with a Dissertation concerning the mind of the lower animals. By JOHN SHEPPARD, author of Thoughts on Devotion. 2d ed., 1841.

of it as merely to *contain them in*, while they are indifferent to its material glories.

There arises a suggestion whether, in order to a perceptive intimacy with the material characters of the place, it be not necessary that the spirit be invested with some *material vehicle*, to replace the gross mortal body which it has abandoned, and it is an allowable conjecture that it *may* have such a medium of perception and action during the interval of waiting; waiting, in the case of many of these spirits, so very long for the resurrection. At the same time it cannot be conceived that even *pure spirits*, if we should suppose *angels* to be such, should not have a most perfect vivid perception of all the fair and magnificent *material* phenomena of the scenes where they are present in execution of their offices. To them such characters of their Master's works cannot be all blank and indifferent.

The idea, "Abraham's bosom," is too figurative (and at the same time Judaical) to admit of definite statement. But it is obviously of intimately and affectionately *social* import. Also it seems to imply that good men of a later age are conveyed into the society of those who have entered the spiritual world long before. There is all imaginable reason to believe that good men will renew their communication with the friends who have preceded them in death.

The expressions, "with Christ," "present with the Lord," must imply some much more direct, sensible, evident manifestation of Christ, than anything attainable in the mortal state; something more answering to the idea of *society*, than can be realized by the most lively faith. Something indeed that *sets* faith, in any sublunary sense and mode of it, aside by what shall be far better; the expressions would seem to imply an object of immediate perception—a *personal recognition*.

The great stress uniformly laid in the New Testament on the *resurrection*, proves that the soul will attain a very high advancement in whatever can form its felicity, by the assumption of a glorious and immortal vehicle, formed from the element of earth. Sometimes indeed there is a kind of ambitious aspiring, that would almost wish to have done with *matter*, for ever, in the constitution of our existence. If *angels*—any created beings—be absolutely pure spirits, it would seem as if this combination of our spirits with matter, however refined, would mark us as an order of beings essentially and eternally inferior. But could we have therefore a right to complain? For there must be superior and inferior even in happy existence. Doubtless there are orders of beings transcendently, and that must be eternally, superior to the human—the human which is, as a plain fact, the lowest of strictly rational creatures. With regard, however, to matter, any objection we might feel to be clothed with it, may be overruled by the consideration, that our Lord himself appears to have retained a connection with it in his exalted state; whether for a permanence, after he shall have laid down his mediatorial office, we cannot know, and may be allowed to doubt.



Redeemed souls in the intermediate state must be possessed of ample means of happiness, if it were only for this plain reason—that else the long period of their waiting for the final consummation would be insupportable. To those who depart now, or departed recently, it will be a duration of very many ages; and no doubt they know it well. But think of the saints before the deluge, or in the patriarchal ages, foreseeing that consummation, at the distance of many thousand years, or at least having had now the actual proof of the long delay. We must not imagine them exercising *patience*, since that implies something endured, suffered; but to cause them an entire complacency under this immensely protracted delay of their highest felicity,—to secure them invariably happy in their present time and state, century after century, millennium after millennium,—to prevent such earnestness of anticipation, as should partake of restlessness; to do this, what mighty resources for enjoyment must they possess! And these resources must be in the activity of the intellectual faculties and the affections; in attaining truth, loving goodness, admiring grandeur, adoring the Divinity. Nor can we well conceive they should be in a state of total inaction in a more *practical* sense; that they should be, so to speak, *laid aside* in an inert existence, while activity is prevailing, in all probability, through the whole empire of the Almighty. Should it not be probable that the servants of God, of every order, everywhere in the universe, and in every stage of their existence, have something to *do*, some office to execute? And if such be the vocation of departed human spirits, it might be no violence of conjecture to suppose they may sometimes, some of them, have appointments in a certain connection with the race here, to which by their nature they still belong, though their immediate mortal relation to it has ceased. . . . Benevolent they certainly are, and if they *have* active employments assigned them, it cannot be conceived there are any fitter objects of benevolence than the poor sojourners in the world they have left. At all events it is to be presumed that the manner in which their faculties, or call them powers, are exercised, must be that which will make their existence *most worth*, if we may so express it, in the creation—most worth that they should exist as intelligent beings; and it must be that which will render most service and honor to the Lord of all.

A thought is suggested as to one great difference between the service so rendered, of whatever special kind it be, and that which was rendered by piety in the mortal, and partly sinful life preceding. For if, as we must believe, death be to good men the end of all sin, and the emancipated spirit be constituted immediately and absolutely holy, then its activity being perfectly conformed to the divine law, will need no pardon. It will not therefore be under the economy of *redemption*, in the same sense as the very imperfect obedience in the mortal state. What a strange contrast this must make in consciousness and review!

Another suggestion arises, in respect to those who have already been during an immensely long period, according to *our* measures of time, in

that separate state. Their recollected mortal life must appear to them, in point of duration, most insignificant in their retrospect. What an unimaginable power of memory they must possess, if they retain it vividly in sight after so vast an interval, occupied, as we assume, with a continual and perhaps very various exercise of their faculties. But after all our conjectures, imaginings, and almost impatient speculations, here we still are, in front of the awful impervious veil. How striking to consider, while we stand here, that one and another of our friends, with us just as yesterday, inquisitively conversing perhaps on this very subject, are now, are at this instant in the midst of reality; have experimental knowledge of two worlds, while we are yet confined to one.

And next the consideration that we also shall erewhile, some of us very shortly, go into the light and amazement of that revelation. What an emphatic call to the utmost diligence and earnestness to be ready for the transition,—and what an intensely severe reproach to indifference, negligence, and absorption of the soul in temporal things, while consciously approaching every moment nearer to so portentous an event.

My dear sir, you will believe that I am fully aware how little there is in these pages to any other effect than that of *stimulating* inquiry, and showing the impossibility of answering it. Still the thoughtful mind *cannot*, and ought not, to let the great subject alone. We *must* continue inquiring, till we obtain an answer *elsewhere*. . . .

I remain, my dear sir,

Yours, faithfully,

J. FOSTER.

P. S.—I read, slightly indeed, after its publication, Taylor's "Physical Theory of another Life," but, as far as I recollect, he takes no distinct account of the intermediate state, speculating almost exclusively, and very ingeniously, on the *final* state. The scriptural arguments (and the others) for the mutual recognition after death of those who have been friends on earth, are well brought together in one of *Gisborne's Essays*, in a small volume of which I forget the exact title. . . .

---

CCXIV. TO THE REV. THOMAS COLES.

*Stapleton, August 23, 1839.*

. . . . I have to thank you for your letter, written under circumstances of mournful interest, anticipations so soon to be realized. Then you could hold converse with the object of your affectionate solicitude; now it is silence and absence as complete as two different worlds can make it. How strange, how striking it is to reflect, that the loved person who was *here* in living communication but a few days since, is now in a realm invisible and unknown, and (wherever it is) unimaginably different from this, where he was and is not. How much within this so brief an

interval he has attained to know which we know not, and could not know in even a sojourn on earth of a thousand years. How vast a movement forward, made in one moment, in the career of a human spirit! But what other movements, thus sudden perhaps, are effected by the progress of duration, in an eternal career! Any view of eternity is overwhelming to thought, but peculiarly to the thought that we, that this very soul shall exist for ever. Sometimes, even apart from the idea of retribution, it seems almost fearful. "How can I sustain an endless existence? How can I prolong sentiment and action for ever and ever? What may or can become of me in so stupendous a predicament? What an accumulation of miracles to preserve my faculties, my being, from becoming exhausted and extinct!"

How can there be an undecaying, ever new, and fresh vitality and animation, to go powerfully along with an infinite series of objects, changes, excitements, activities?

While sympathizing with you under the mournful dispensation, I must congratulate you on that by which it is so happily alleviated, the delightful confidence that it is well with him who has departed. And the more cordial will be this consolation from the circumstance, that (as we heard it here) in the earlier stage of his illness, his mind was oppressed by gloomy apprehensions. How happy a change for *him*, as antecedent and preparatory to the still happier change accomplished in his final hour. You will have sometimes mused on what might have been, if God had willed it; how your son, thus brought under the full influence of religion, might have been appointed to a protracted life of Christian excellence and social usefulness. You can easily figure him as passing through many years of such a life, a pleasure to yourself and a benefit to others. But you know that the sovereign will had *reasons* for deciding otherwise, and that those reasons, if they could be made intelligible to you, you would absolutely and emphatically approve. It is probable that he, the subject of the decision, does by this time understand and approve them, and has a complacent confidence that you, not as yet understanding them, will devoutly acquiesce. How much he has at present the advantage of you, if he has a clear manifestation of that concerning which you are called to exercise submissive faith!

---

CCXV. TO THE REV. JOSIAH HILL.

1839.

. . . . There is nothing for me to say, save and except an expression of my gratification that we may now be confident of having you here, for a term, I hope, as long as the life of *both* us two. Which of us is to leave this dark world the first? On supposition that the GREAT Book should be placed before you, with intimation that, if you chose (being permitted) to open at such a page, you would read the year, the

month, the day appointed for your entrance on another world, could you forbear? Suppose you had opened the volume where you would have just only to raise the next leaf, would you touch its edge, and, deliberating, decide to leave it still lying flat, the portentous page on the other side? I am supposing that you were assured, on *the right authority*, of exemption from divine inhibition, and therefore culpability.

. . . . Thank you for sending *the Watchman*; some of it I have read, and do really mean to read all in it that relates to the question. I have read *very* little, hardly anything, of the long debates, filling one half-score of columns after another of the *Morning Chronicle*.

As to the whole affair that has raised so prodigious a hubbub, one cannot help feeling that it is worthy of all satire.

A *national education*—there are millions of children and youth sorely wanting it; and there is a proposition for applying a miserable dribble of money to such a purpose—no less than £30,000, about as much as is paid out of the public purse to some two or three sinecurist placemen—not *one-third* of what is paid to the Queen Dowager; and what a combustion about it over all the land! It is a mighty engine constructing to be worked by the pope and the devil. Verily *they* have not been accustomed to work so cheap. They must have found out how to make a little go a great way. I wish they would be as moderate in all other departments of their receipts and expenditures; we should then be able to do without divers things, Methodism among the rest. Said Methodism has lent itself in aid of what we perfectly well know to be the real principle, and under but thin disguise, of the aristocracy and the great majority of the church, viz. a mortal hatred of the mental improvement of the mass of the people. They would rather (the Methodists I mean) that the miserable multitude should be left in their ignorance and barbarism (an ignorance and barbarism no longer, as formerly, inert, prostrate, and obsequious, but strongly rankling and fermenting into active mischief), than they should be educated in any manner not making the *specialities* of religion the principal thing.

But, indeed, ——— I observe, is for making quite a clear business of it—is for having no national education at all, since the government, he says, have not only no duty, but no right to take any concern in the education of the people. Duly tax the people, and punish them when they commit crimes, and there *their* business ends; for I do not see what business they have even to make *laws* for them, to tell them what is wrong; for law is always considered as a *moral education*, not less than a rule of punishment.

. . . . Where there is not downright hypocrisy, there may be affectation and cant. To hear this Methodist declamation, one might think that *knowledge*, cultivating good sense, as the opposites of brutish ignorance, vulgarity, and coarse sensuality, were of no value at all, unless as combined with—not the *general* principles of religion, but with a special creed. To read well, write well, to understand the language well; to be

ready in arithmetic, to acquire some of the plainer principles of the most useful sciences, were utterly worthless;—as well be without them, unless as interwoven throughout with the catechism. At this rate a boy should not be taught a mechanical art, or a trade, unless in immediate connection with detailed articles of faith. What a nuisance, therefore, are the thousands of private day-schools which are teaching these supposed useful matters. There is a large quantity of *cant* in all this.

Nor was it to stand for anything that in the government's plan there was to be a clergyman at the head of the institution, to see to the religious instruction of the *church* pupils, and that an arrangement was to be made for the religious instruction, separately, of the dissenting portion of them. As to the Roman Catholic portion (or *popish*, I would name it), they are to be left in the pure savage state, unless their own party have adequate means and exertion to give them some little education.

As to the real intrinsic character of popery (which shows itself when there is nothing to keep it under restraint as in Spain), I fully agree with ———. But he admits that, *practically*, it is very greatly modified in this Protestant country; it is so, too, in *France*, a non-protestant country. But then, does not this, just in that proportion, modify and reduce the harm of its combination with the school-teaching in this country? Or would he allow himself to be taken for one of those dreamers who are apprehending the approach of such an ascendancy of popery here as will set loose its real character into action? . . . He has great real or pretended reverence for the established church. But what does the increase of popery say of the quality and efficacy of that church as a Protestant guardian? And, talk of popery! It is in the grand centre and vomitory of that church that popery is daily augmenting and threatening to inundate the ecclesiastical domains.

P.S. I have hardly expressed with due strength the observation that ——— and ——— must wish that the Irish, and equally any other popish nation, should be left wholly and absolutely *uneducated*, abandoned literally to the savage state, since the intermixed popery vitiates the whole thing essentially. Perhaps they will reply, "No, our objection is to a *Protestant state* patronizing and paying for such education;" it comes in effect to the same. The Protestant state is to refuse because such education is absolutely bad, worse than nothing, and what, therefore, it cannot be wished that *any* state should confer or inflict on the people. They must deprecate that the Irish popish gentry should, from their own private means, support such an education. At any rate, supposing that they (these gentry) could not or would not, and that the people were so imbued with popery that they could not (as how should they?) yield to receive an expressly Protestant education, it would then be the duty of the Protestant state to teach them nothing (*except their liability to be hanged*), and leave them to become, as nearly as possible, like the beasts of the field.

CCXVI. TO JOHN PURSER, ESQ.

*Stapleton, February 4, 1840*

. . . . The alarming danger now happily and for some time to come, blown over, that the Tories might come into power, had a main reference to the too probably dangerous consequences in Ireland. For the escape, the *temporary* escape of both countries, thanks to the Irish members of parliament, and to *Dan.* as their imperial chief. The high-sounding epithet is authorized by the plain fact that there is no individual, probably in the world, who, on the strength of what he is in his mere self, in the absence of all accessories of office, rank, wealth, connexion, has so prodigious a power. We of the reforming (or call it radical) class, have exceptions and grave ones, to take against him, but on the whole are vastly glad to have him as the Achilles of our camp. We want every strong hand against the proud and powerful party arrayed in fierce opposition to every kind of national improvement. Do but look at their temper and purposes, more flagrantly manifested of late than ever before. Hatred of everything tending to favor and advance the interests of the people; hatred of *popular education*, on any other condition than that of vigorous subservience to the church; hatred of dissenters and their just claims; hatred of all attempts at the correction of old corrupted institutions; bigotry in all forms; and an immense quantity of the most loathsome hypocrisy under the pretence and boast of zeal for Protestantism; a furious bellowing kept up for the basest purposes by very many, who neither know nor care anything at all about real religion.

You advert to the "*Oxford Tract*" concern. It is curious enough that, just contemporaneously with the loudest burst of the cleric outcry about Protestantism, a section of them, rapidly extending as it is understood, are forswearing that same Protestantism, and veering far and fast toward Rome. I have read very little on the subject, not even Taylor's pieces,\* which however I do mean to read some time soon; very able and effective I hear on all hands. It is but small interest that I feel about the whole affair, excepting in one point of view, its being a schism in the establishment, tending to confusion and dislocation, an intimation of rot and cracks in the timbers of the old pernicious edifice. On this account it pleases me much; for while it is too true that it is doing *some* injury to religion, I hope it will do much more damage to what has been and continues infinitely pernicious to Christianity, a state-established hierarchy.

All I have lived to see has confirmed me faithful to the principles of that early time which you well remember. I want, if I could, to repel the suspicion, that my favorite early associate, friend, and—dare I say?—pupil, has somewhat deflected toward the more fashionable side. . . .

\* Ancient Christianity and the Doctrines of the Oxford Tracts for the Times. By the Author of "Spiritual Despotism."

CCXVII. TO SIR C. E. SMITH, BART.

March 9, 1840.

DEAR SIR,— . . . On supposition that you saw my letter to Dr. L., I shall not need to repeat in many words what I observed as to the position of writers in the controversy, that the work is most appropriately and advantageously in the hands of men vigilantly attentive to the contemporary movements; immediately apprised of the course of opinions; habitually inspecting periodical publications; prompt to seize topics and occasions as they arise; men, who, in a phrase of the field, can *shoot flying*. Here specialities must make a large part of the service; for surely we are not now to be constantly repeating the common-places of the argument.

We cannot but believe that intelligent controversy will do *some* good in favor of truth. It will at least tend to give dissenters a better hold of their principles, of which the mass of them are very ignorant; and it may prevent some waverers from going over to the establishment—will it do much more? Do you *expect* that it will? Where are the proselytes from the adherents to the church? adherents confirmed such by either opinion or habit? With one or two exceptions, what clergyman (anything worth as an acquisition to us) has become a dissenter? and what laymen of any account have fallen into our ranks? My sphere of knowledge is extremely narrow; but I do not learn that even the extreme, and in many instances violent and outrageous bigotry of the clergy, so glaring in the present times, has had the effect of exciting in church-goers a disgust against the *church itself*. They cling to it in spite of any dislike or disapprobation (*if* indeed they feel it) of the spirit of so many of its ministers. It seems to be only on those who are adverse or indifferent to the church that this furious illiberality has the effect—the good effect I will call it—of creating or confirming an antipathy to the establishment. And is it not probable that this virulent bigotry will do ten times more for the cause of dissent in the way of consolidation among themselves, and of acquisition from the intelligent indifferents, if such there be, than all the theoretical argumentation? Argument will be but a subsidiary force; let it be added, however, as a sort of guide to the action of the stronger force.

Here occurs to me a consideration that strikes me very strongly. You wish the controversy to be carried on in an amicable manner; quite right for an intercommunication direct, and almost, as it were, personal, between the parties. But at the same time, in an interchange of reasonings on these terms, the dissenter is precluded from by far the most effective of his resources; I mean, an unqualified exhibition of the practical character of the hierarchy reviewed on the wider ground of history, or (more immediately available) as seen in our own history during the last few generations, and as manifested in the present times.

. . . . Look at the present state and temper of the church; the into-

lerance of the most ostensible and prominent portion of it, acquiesced in by the main or whole body, or at least not protested against by any part of it;—the firm alliance with political corruption; the opposition to all sorts of reform; the identifying of Christianity with the establishment, or almost giving the precedence to the latter; the essentially worldly nature of the whole system of appointment by patronage, purchase at auction, &c., &c., and the melancholy and disastrous fact that a vast majority of the clergy teach a doctrine fatally erroneous, if the doctrine of the reformers be true. Now, all this belongs to the dissenters' argument, it is of the essence of their case, and without it they can do but very partial justice to that case. They have a right to insist on this as manifesting the essentially vicious nature of an established church; that these are not mere *incidents*, foreign and separable; if they had been so, in what country so likely as in England should they have been cleared off, leaving the establishment a pure Christian institution? Why do I trouble you to read this prolixity of sentences? it is to show that the dissenting principle cannot be asserted in the fulness of its legitimate argument in such a controversy as churchmen will admit to be amicable or even civil. They will require you to come away out of sight of all this, and to go quietly with them on some ideal ground of a plausible theory. They will talk to you (just as if the thing were not palpably Utopian) about a supposed ecclesiastical institution that should send throughout the country some dozen thousand pious, well-disciplined, diligent, exemplary instructors, vigilantly superintended by faithful, zealous, apostolic bishops, authorized and aided in every way by patrons and a government intent on the spiritual welfare of the people; and then they will challenge you with the question, "Would not *this* be an excellent thing, far better than leaving the important concern to voluntarism, fanaticism, and chance?" To which the proper answer would be, "It is not worth making a question about so idle a fiction; wait till the government, the prelacy, and the body of aristocratic patronage shall consist at least of men decidedly religious; till the universities shall be 'schools of the prophets,' and till young men shall enter the church no longer as a mere *profession*, or in pursuit of the *prizes*, but from the serious desire to promote religion. Then bring the question into discussion. In the meantime we must be allowed to judge of an establishment according to its actual quality and working, as exemplified in such institutions, heretofore and at the present time, and not according to any fanciful and impracticable theory."

By all means, let the arguments of a mere theoretical kind, such as *may* be debated amicably with the better tempered of the opponents, and especially the scriptural one, so much insisted on by Dr. Wardlaw and others, be kept in action. They will be adapted to the small proportion of speculative thinkers. But for popular effect there is comparably greater power in an exhibition of the actual vices and mischiefs of establishments, and our own in particular. And the recent and present



spirit of the church is such as to deserve no forbearance of this mode of conducting the war—a *defensive* war as it is. But here I am reminded that I should not, before a further inspection of the papers in your volume, assume that you have wholly forborne the use of such ammunition. The Oxford party are working to good purpose—fast cutting away the old boasted ground of the establishment—its *efficacy to maintain an uniformity of faith*.

I am, dear Sir, yours, very respectfully,

J. FOSTER.

CXXVIII. TO SIR C. E. SMITH, BART.

*April 9, 1840.*

. . . . I most sincerely thank you for the gratification the book has afforded me, and I should add the valuable *instruction*—but for the misfortune of having about the worst memory of anybody in England, that is not absolutely in dotage. In strife against this sad grievance, I have read many of the papers two or three times.

All your readers, even your opponents, must have been ready to testify to the urbanity, or I should rather say, the Christian spirit, in which you have declared your opinions on both the ecclesiastical and political topics. I cannot add any expression of hope that those opponents will have admitted any conviction from your arguments, judicious as they are, and set forth in so excellent a spirit; for it is a fact, all the world over, that no opponent is ever convinced by controversy. I cannot recollect, that ever in my life I convinced any person, even in any degree, by opposition in argument. How happens it, that all the *argument* on the subject of religious establishments never has gained over an unit per thousand of some fifteen thousand clergymen, a tolerably considerable portion of them being, it may be presumed, men of conscience, and many of these being also men of large information and highly disciplined intellect?

While you acknowledge yourself to be hopeless of the clergy, I am glad that you can see cause to be even “sanguine” as to a portion of the gentry; since it is a judgment which you have the means of forming on an extensive acquaintance in the country and in London, with individuals and with the signs of movement and change in opinions. Within my most diminutive sphere of acquaintance I am not aware of any favorable indications.

. . . . We shall look with much interest beyond mere curiosity to the consequences of the commotion in Scotland; for a better understanding of which I am much indebted to your papers on the subject. It was not till lately that it attracted much of my attention. Some well written letters, in one of the daily papers, within the last few months, drew my partiality towards the non-intrusionists. But I was taken considerably aback by the account of a late public meeting of dissenters in Edinburgh. . . . They said very justly, the movers of this tumult are after

all the determined maintainers of an establishment, and grossly inconsistent if not dishonest ones. . . . They want to combine the privileges of dissenters (such as we maintain, at a great and voluntary cost) with the emolument and advantageous station of an establishment. They would repel and turn out the state, at one door, from claiming any interference in their self-authorized proceedings, and summon it in at another, to render them its humble services, and pay their stipends and all their expenses.

. . . . I attempted to read Mr. Alston's pamphlet; I mean to do it; but in the first trial I stopped short. In the first few pages I was dumb-founded at his ignorance in citing "the parable of the tares," and his outright assertion (an assertion however got quite in vogue) that personal wickedness is no disqualification for the ministry of religion. The grave avowal of this impious absurdity was not likely to allow my memory of facts a quiet sleep. . . .

Your opponent F. H. (Dr. Arnold I believe) is evidently a very intelligent and a candid man. But what a plight such a man gets into, when he is to defend an establishment. His sixth letter for instance. It appears to me a piece of inextricable involvement; but indeed I had such difficulty to understand it, that I had not patience to make the competent trial. One needs no elaborate investigation to be very sure that all this business of arrangement, gradation, centralization, &c., has nothing to do with the plain, simple concern of teaching the Christian religion to the people.\*

Yet it is necessary there should be some minds able and resolute to traverse every part of the debateable ground; and you have done your part most worthily thus far—as only an introduction, I trust, to a long sequel of valuable service; and while I am too old and frigid to be sanguine about anything but the coming of the millennium, at some distant period, I am glad you *can* be sanguine, as a necessary temper of mind for making zealous efforts. Are you able to extend the warm play of this feeling or temperament (if so, I should greatly envy you) to the political affairs of our country? We were in exuberant delight (vain dream!) at obtaining the Reform Bill. Even I was so foolish, in spite of my desperate conviction of the depravity of human nature. How confidently we specified the abuse it would sweep away; the beneficent measures, schemes, institutions, it would triumphantly carry into effect!

Well! we have had this grand panacea coming now on eight years, and through all this long trial its value and efficacy have been crumbling away under a powerful and unremitting process, so complete now in system, means, and agency, as to have produced a general conviction

\* *Vide* DR. ARNOLD'S Miscellaneous Works. *Letters to "Hertford Reformer."* Letter 2, p. 436. Letter 5, p. 449. Letter 9, p. 486. Letter 10, p. 470. Letter 14, p. 486. Letter 17, p. 502. "Centralization," is discussed particularly in Letter 10.

that a general election would be the regular funeral of the vaunted bill. And what help? what resource? there can be nothing even decently and distantly approaching to a genuine representative house without the ballot, and that we cannot have.

. . . . From an account in yesterday's Morning Chronicle, it seems probable that *Thorogood* is doomed to die in prison; one did rather feel as if he carried the conscientious principle to an extreme. I would pay the church-rate when legally demanded, as I would surrender my money to a highwayman, just to escape a greater evil. But still, his suffering example *may* do great good,—*will*, unless the clergy and their corrupt adherents shall resolutely and successfully maintain their detestable courts. There is no hateful part of their institutions which they have not a *thoro'-good* will to maintain and perpetuate.

Has there fallen in your way an "Essay on Apostolical Succession," written by Powell, a Wesleyan minister? It has very speedily come to a second edition. Have hardly read any of it yet: but some intelligent persons tell me it is very able and effective. Great research is evident on the slightest glance.

---

CCXIX. TO JAMES FAWCETT, ESQ.

[On the character of the late Dr. Fawcett.]

March 12, 1840.

YOUR friendly letter ought not to have remained so long unanswered; and would not if I had really felt that my slight, and I may now say remote, reminiscences of your venerable ancestor could be of any value for the description of his character. But they can be but as nothing in comparison with what you have had the means of knowing from persons associated with him during a large portion of his life; especially from my estimable friend your late father. You must yourself also, up to some considerable advance in youth, have been familiarly acquainted with him.

It is now (oh the flight of *time*!) nearly forty years since, in a transient visit, I even saw him, and approaching to fifty since I was habitually near him. I have never heard any distinct account, and can have no conjecture what effect on his character and habits was produced by the many experiences of the many years of his later life, during which I was far off and wholly a stranger.

It is very superfluous to say, that any now surviving person who ever spent, as I did, several years in his house, his society, and under his instructions, must have retained to this day a deep impression of his excellence, and not the less so for any recollection of minor points of character which they might have considered as defects.

His piety was a pervading principle through his whole mind, and went into all the practical habits of his life; it was uniform and rational—by which latter epithet I mean that it was accompanied, or rather blended,

with sound judgment—with *good sense*. His social devotional exercises (as in the family worship) were remarkable for solemnity, simplicity, and variety, having (at the time I was an attendant on them) no recurrence of set phrases, but passing freely into any form of thought and expression. His preaching, always serious, instructive, and pertinent to the subject, was yet, I will confess, deficient in what I may call exciting and stimulant qualities. It had not bold, prominent ideas, original or striking passages; it was considerably of the tenor usually denominated *common-place*. And the manner was not advantageous for attention or attraction. There was too *intense a gravity*—an aspect and cast of delivery bearing a character of sadness, gloom, and austerity, which really had, on young persons at least, a repressive effect. The manner might almost be denominated *funereal*. There was nothing assumed or affected in all this; it was expressive of the preacher's temperament, which was of a deeply sombre color.

This was felt in social intercourse. His younger friends could not be on what I may call *companionable* terms with him. They were kept at a certain distance by the gravity of his character, which precluded a free, uncautious familiarity. It is probable, this temperament, perhaps originally natural to him, had been much confirmed by severe bodily afflictions, by difficulties and grievances experienced at times in his ministerial course, and by a habitually gloomy view (a true one) of the state of the world and the depravity of human nature.

In applying the terms *grave*, *gloomy*, *austere*—I should very specially observe that there was nothing *acrid* or *cynical*; he had kind affections and genuine benevolence; compassion for distress, a concern for the welfare of all with whom he was connected, and delighted in the signs of commencing piety, especially in young persons.

I should have noted that at the time I was most with him, he was in advanced age, and had long held an acknowledged precedence in respectability and authority to any other minister in all that part of the country. This had contributed to render him very sensitive, rather morbidly so, sometimes, to anything that looked like a deficiency of respect. It was not therefore easy to maintain with him anything in the form of a *debate*. He was apt to be hurt by opposition of opinion, as if it were a personal disrespect, and could not go into a free discussion on the equal condition of "give and take." He was not arrogant and dictatorial: by no means: but he felt dissent or opposition as of the nature of an *offence*, and brooded over it with a painful irritation. I do not think he attributed to himself extraordinary talent, or deemed his writings as above the level of plain performances, aimed to do good. But he would have been aggrieved by any remarks of the nature of *animadversion*. I remember when he was about printing his Family Bible, he sent to me, at a great distance, the first two or three printed sheets, with a request for any observations that might occur to me. But I did not—really felt that I dared not—venture any remarks to the effect of indicating *faults*.

It was the wish of some of his friends, myself included, that he had more limited himself in the matter of authorship. He was, at the same time, very free from *ostentation* of himself in that capacity. He rarely and but briefly made any reference to the works he published.

He had a lively perception, and was liberal and animated in praise, of the merits of other authors, whether contemporary, or of older date.

Considering that the order of his religious principles and feelings was so much according to what might be called the *puritanical* standard, it was remarkable how little contracted were his taste and compass of reading. He read with pleasure any sort of books that were good of their kind—history, poetry, fiction, even romance. I remember at this distance of time, a conversation on one of *Fielding's* novels, his discriminating observations on which showed how attentively and with what interest he had read it.

Considering also his tendency to gloom and sadness, it was remarkable what a lively perception he had of wit and humor. A short but genuine laugh would show how instantly and with what pleasure he took it. I recollect his even lending himself, in a sly, quiet way, to humor a practical joke, rather at the expense of Mrs. F., on some occasion of a violent and mistaken fret.

He was far from discouraging vivacity in the young people around him, to any extent short of absolute folly.

In short, as a comprehensive observation on all these miscellaneous particulars, he had in all ways a candid and liberal feeling, as amiable as it was remarkable in a person of his temperament. Or if there should appear to be some exception to this in what I have described of his unfortunate sensitiveness to opposition—his aptitude to feel any sign of disagreement as a deficiency of respect—let it be remembered that there was in this feeling no harshness, bitterness, or disposition to inflict pain in return. It was simply *his own painful feeling*, without *hostile reaction*; and he was easily conciliated, when shown that there was no intention to hurt or displease him.

One virtue was pre-eminently his—*indefatigable industry*. This sometimes made me ashamed when with him, and many times in remembrance since. Every part of every day, the whole year round, he was busy in some useful employment. The only observable interval would be, that he would sometimes sit at ease smoking his pipe for a quarter of an hour. He took much pleasure in *bookbinding*; but while employed in folding, stitching, &c., he would always have some one (often myself) employed in reading to him, for the benefit of both. During this exercise his large, various knowledge would afford many useful points of information or comment. He did not care what the book was, if there was anything valuable in it. His favorite author at that time was Dr. Johnson.

The above, dear sir, is a very meagre sketch; I wish my memory had been more faithful. The time referred to has greatly faded on its page

of record. But it will, to the end of life, retain, faithfully engraven, the *general lines* of a character of extraordinary excellence. From such a character there will be but little detracted by such particulars as I have ventured to remark as weaknesses or defects. He was one of the few individuals who in that period (at least the earlier part of it), and in that part of the country, were conspicuous as holding forth the light of evangelical religion, and as doing honor to the cause of dissent. By many more than his descendants his character will be long held in veneration. . . .

P.S. I might have noticed that Dr. Fawcett's *personal presence* was uncommonly imposing and authoritative. His saturnine countenance, the habitual seriousness of his look, his powerful voice, his large and tall figure, and a certain unconscious dignity in his measured step, would have made on even a stranger an impression of something very different from an ordinary person. . . .

## CCXX. TO THE REV. JOSIAH HILL.

*Bourton, July 9, 1840.*

. . . . If one could (may God do what we cannot!) raise the minds of *young* persons, to a most decided state of conviction, resolution, exertion, and habitual solicitation of help from Heaven, as to the grand purpose and effectual improvement of life! If they could but fully anticipate the feelings which are brought so imperatively into the mind on a near approach of the end of life, combined with reflection on life in its review! How often one regrets the impossibility of imparting to youth some of the gravest thoughts and feelings of age. But yet they can, and happily some of them do, consider that life is passing fast away, that the one grand purpose of it, as a whole, is the proper purpose of each and every part—that at any advanced point of it, it is very lamentable to have to look back on the past stage as lost to the great object—that the race of time to the middle term of life is comparatively short—that in passing down to the *decline*, every year will seem shorter (according to the concurrent testimony of their seniors) than the preceding—that there is the constant menacing possibility of the career being prematurely closed—that “even the longest day will have an end,”—and then—what *then*?

## CCXXI. REV. B. S. HALL.

*Bourton, July 17, 1840.*

DEAR OLD FRIEND,—. . . . What times and events have passed away since *Clapton* was one of the places—the most pleasant of the places—of friendly resort. I have looked up that way with a degree of regret, that the ancient attraction thither exists there no more, and in all probability never will again.

I am glad to believe that your *present* position is a more useful one than any former. How utterly improbable it would have appeared, in that long passed time to which I have referred, that your appointment in Providence should be where it has now placed you,—and where I trust its merciful favor will abide with you and your family.

The changes and varieties in your past life will have been a profitable discipline for your present vocation, as having given you much experience of human nature and character in its varieties of good and evil. Numberless things will be suggested from your own practical knowledge in aid of those illustrations and instructions which you have to administer to your people. I always consider it an advantage to a preacher, if an observant and reflective man, to have passed through some changes of situation and acquaintance with mankind. I should much like to hear you state some of the results of your now long and diversified experience,—the judgments you have been led to form on divers matters on which we have conversed in years far gone, or which have come in your way during the subsequent course of our lives.

---

CCXIII. TO THE REV. W. PEECHY.

[On the Millennium.]

Stapleton, 1840.

MY DEAR SIR,—Your letter would not have remained unacknowledged so unconscionable a length of time, or *any* considerable length of time, if I could have given myself credit for being able to write five sentences to the purpose on the subject of it. But in truth I have never been led to think particularly on that subject.

The study of prophecy (as to yet future ages) has carried ingenious and learned men into so many theories and fantastic presumptions, many of them already convicted of folly, that I have never had *faith* enough for it, except as to a few apparently infallible passages—such as the return of the Jews to their ancient land, and the happy dispensation (call it *millennium*) reserved to shine on this dark world *some time*—but when? for how very faint are the signs that as yet glimmer on the horizon! At the rate of the progress hitherto of genuine Christianity on the globe, thousands of years may pass away before *that* millennium can arrive—an awful mystery in the divine government. But one cannot help indulging a hope, though resting on a loose and arbitrary speculation, that there *may* come in some not very distant period, a mighty acceleration, with unprecedented and astonishing events, of the reforming process. If asked the *reason* of such a hope, the answer might be little more than this—that *unless* it shall be so, the world is doomed to an awfully protracted duration of its past and present dismal state; which one is most extremely unwilling to believe.

It may be well for stimulated exertion to entertain a very exaggerated

estimate of what is seen and is doing at present. But often one is invaded with a chilling sentiment in hearing the effusions of our own good men, when they speak of the zealous operations, and the comparatively diminutive though welcome successes, as if actually the moral world were rapidly changing under our sight, as the physical is in this vernal season.

But as to the particular subject of your letter—the inspired predictions of the happy age which is *some time* to come on the world, are so strong, and so much in the apparent language of universality, as to allow a confidence, that literally all the human race will then be under the power of the true religion,—were it not for a dark shade of doubt arising from another quarter of prophecy.

The happy season anticipated and promised must be that of one thousand years of the Apocalypse, during which the influence of infernal power will be banished or restrained. But then what takes place at the termination of that blessed period? A tremendous combination and insurrection of wicked men, in countless multitude, so bold and fierce in depravity, as to conspire for the destruction of the saints. Now the plain question is, how comes this to be possible? WHENCE this multitude of wicked human beings,—so wicked, as to aim at the destruction of the righteous,—and so numerous, as to be confident of effecting it, perhaps *reasonably* confident according to ordinary calculation, since to defeat them requires a direct divine interposition, “fire from heaven?”

Either there must have remained, during the happy period, a very considerable portion of the earth’s inhabitants unsubdued to the kingdom of Christ, in spirit hostile to it and its subjects,—or, if all are good thoroughly, and to the conclusion of the prolonged period, there must then take place a frightful apostasy, among them or their descendants. And it would seem a little time will suffice to bring this grand eruption of evil; since it appears to be spoken of a contemporary of Satan’s “being loosed for a little season.”

Which part of the alternative is the more probable—or rather the less *improbable*? for the phenomenon is in any way marvellously strange—yet plainly and literally a *fact*, if we may at all pretend to know *when* prophecy means a literal fact.

As to the fact of there being a sad prevalence of irreligion at the conclusion of the world, it seems more than implied by such a passage as 1 Thess. ii., 3, “When they shall say peace and safety.” Probably also by Revelations i., 7, “Wail,” &c. The same might be said of our Lord’s own predictions, if we could be certain to distinguish between what referred to the end of the world, and what was limited to the destruction of Jerusalem.

But the alternative. I confess I am quite at fault for an opinion, or a presumption, whether it be more likely that, during a long succession of centuries and generations, in defiance of such an illustrious manifestation and prevalence of Christianity, as may be denominated the *reign*



of Christ and his saints on earth (in accomplishment of the promise, "The heathen for his inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession"), there can remain a very considerable portion of the race, anywhere on the globe in obstinate resistance; or, on the other hand, that speedily after the completion of a certain number of those centuries, in spite of the mighty power which will have been acquired by truth and righteousness, by virtue of long and universal prevalence (to say nothing of the continuance of divine interposition), there *can* be a desperate, furious, and wide extended apostasy. Either phenomenon confounds one's faculty of thought. One might suggest one consideration, which may be called *economical*. Would it not be a greater *sum of gain* (so to denominate it) to the kingdom of Christ, for the whole world—for all men—to have belonged to it through so many ages, *though* followed by such an apostasy, than for a considerable or large portion of the race to have *stood out* all that time, and to break forth at last into active rebellion? We have to consider also the radical depravity of human nature, not essentially *abrogated*, but only counteracted, repressed, and corrected by divine influence even during the happy ages. If there should, for a mysterious reason in the divine government, be a suspension of that influence taken together with a renewed permission (according to the prediction) of the *infernal* influence, we may imagine the possibility of a speedy and dreadful change in at least an immediately succeeding generation.

Taking this into consideration, and at the same, considering the character of *universality* in the language predicting the happy period in prospect, I should *incline* to the hope that literally *all* mankind will then be the genuine subjects of Christ.

I cannot expect that these slight and sceptical surmises should give you any satisfaction. I shall be glad if you gain by some better mode of inquiry. We shall leave this dark and miserable world very long before the arrival of the commencement of the bright era,—even *you* will, though young; yet I hope you will live to see some highly favorable and exhilarating change. But may Heaven grant us to attain a far happier state of existence elsewhere, than that of mortals can be even in the Millennium! . . .

---

CCXXIII. TO JOHN PURSER, ESQ.

*Stapleton, July 29, 1840.*

MY DEAR SIR,—Some time within the three weeks that I have been on a visit to some old friends and relations in a distant place, which I had not seen for a considerable number of years, and may not see again, Mrs. W. had the kindness to call here, and (as I was told, she had signified), at your request, to make a friendly inquiry. While I was truly gratified by this, I was reproachfully reminded, once again, and for much

more than the thousandth time, of my vice of procrastination. *That* is the modified form of delinquency to which I do honestly refer many of my sins of omission, and certainly the one now in question, rather than to a worse moral account. Do not you, under the universal law of self-love, always assign any few faults that you have to the most *mitigated species* of culpability? If you do *not*, it would go far to prove that those faults *are* few, and are very venial, which indeed I am most willing to believe. I have no doubt I should have testimony to this gratifying fact from Mrs. P. and *six* other primary, and I know not how many secondary, witnesses of most competent knowledge, and surely I may add myself.

. . . . Many weeks since, a newspaper under your envelope, indicated to me that I was not forgotten amidst the domestic pleasures and varieties at Rathmines Castle, a scene unknown to me locally, to which I have often transferred my imagination from scenes which I did know in times now so far gone into the past, but very often recalled in pleasing but pensive memory. The times and seasons I can well, even vividly, recall, but not *myself* as I then was. I can almost as little carry myself back to realize my then state of feelings, as I can identify you as you now are, with you as you then were. For myself, I say with a sigh of deep regret, "If all the change effected by time had but been for the better!" But the evil things that cleave to, or rather were in this depraved nature, are the things that least give way to the changing operations of time. . . . . A strange feeling arises at the confronted looks of persons mutually and distinctly recollecting what those looks were at a distance of time greater than the average duration of human life, when there has been no meeting in the interval to *graduate* as it were the appearance and perception of change. What a thing it would be if the *souls* could be made as plainly visible as the visages, in a comparison between their early and their actual state. For myself, while acknowledging that early state to have been far, very far indeed from what it ought to have been, I have to acknowledge also that it would require extreme hardihood to make or allow a full, plain exhibition of the present state, as in comparison to the view of a judicial, moral, and religious observer. "What!" he would say, "this—only *this*—after an interval of forty years for correction and improvement, with means, advantages, and monitions innumerable, and convictions and even good resolutions endlessly repeated?" I might well be in haste to close up the miserable spectacle against farther inspection, confining it thenceforward to my own conscious reflection. But no; it *cannot* be so confined; there is another Inspector and Judge! A solemn and alarming thought; when I consider what might and should have been effected in this long interval, and the miserable account of what *has* been, adverting in addition to what I believe and know to have been accomplished in the mind and the life of some of my better and wiser fellow-mortals and co-evals. I should be sunk in the profoundest melancholy, but for the grand sole resource of

the divine mercy as set forth in the propitiatory sacrifice of the Mediator. I often think what a state of feeling mine would be, under a disbelief of this doctrine. And much I wonder how the rejectors of the doctrine, unless they have a lofty opinion of their own merits, can endure to look forward to the future account, in appearing before the supreme and righteous Judge. I never recollect our friend Mrs. O. without great regret for what you have told me of her religious faith, in which, however, you said, I think, that she professes to feel confident and complacent, even in the face of that perfect *law*, which exacts an absolute conformity, without failure or defect, as the condition of acceptance for those who refuse to plead the atonement made by "the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world." Let us be thankful for not having been suffered to be misled into so disastrous an order of religious opinions. . . .

. . . . For Ireland we have been in extreme alarm during the agitation of Lord Stanley's detestable bill, the threatened success of which would have rekindled all the inflammable passions of your island. You have had *Dan.*, I see, about you at Rathmines, lately. He is the man I should be more curious to see and hear than any other individual in the world whom I have not seen. There is not, in the whole world, any other person who has so much moral power, in virtue solely of the individual's own personal qualities. Our reformers, you may be sure, set a very high value on his agency and co-operation—to a certain extent—but totally disown him in his wild project of "repeal;" really cannot understand how he can imagine the practicability, or how he can foresee in the actual attempt anything less fearful than a civil war. . . .

---

CCXXIV. TO MRS. STOKES.

*Stapleton, Dec. 7, 1840.*

MY DEAR OLD FRIEND,—. . . . You can retrace almost numberless circumstances, occurrences, points of time, situations at home and at a distance, all combining to tell the value of a relationship, which it has pleased the heavenly Father to dissolve—to dissolve as to the present world; but leaving a delightful anticipation of what shall be recovered in another.

In the recollection of that long course of associated life, you have the consolation of reflecting that it was a journey in the right direction for a better world, that thus it had not solely its present satisfactions in each passing stage, but had its value with respect to *hereafter*. You will think with gratitude of the vast difference between this and a case of separation, in which the survivor has the melancholy consideration that the now terminated course of united life had nothing in it tending to a happy future; nothing to excite the joyful hope of a delightful meeting again; that whatever satisfactions and advantages it had, they all belonged exclusively to the time in which they were possessed, were all

confined to the interest of the present world, and are therefore now in all senses gone and lost, leaving nothing to carry the desolate mind forward in anticipation of a blessed sequel elsewhere. You will have pleasure too, in considering how soon, comparatively, at so advanced an age, you may expect that the future you are looking forward to will become present, and restore to you, in a far higher condition of excellence and felicity, what you are now mourning as taken away from you for a while. . . .

---

CCXXV. TO THE EDITOR.

*London, July 17 and 20, 1941.*

MY DEAR SIR,—. . . . I do most truly thank you for your kind invitation, which, supposing the case exactly your own, you would feel yourself under an inhibition to avail yourself of. Imagine yourself to have been more weeks than you could reckon, and which you were reluctant to *try* to reckon, absent from your habitat, workshop, and domestic associates, spending a long succession of days in just sidling about to see sights for much of the time, and rambling through the Isle of Wight the rest of it,—having exceeded, by at least an entire month, the time you had intended when you left home—having three or four times even told the people there that you were on the point of returning; having not even *read* what would turn to sixpenny-worth of account—and having become weeks since desperately ashamed of your course of life—in such a predicament you would be *forced* to say, “No, much as I should like to see my good old friends, I must not and cannot for shame, take such a new license for dissipation; the pleasure of the interview would be interfered with by the consciousness that I had no business to be there.”

. . . . I should have delayed coming hither till after the bustling season but for the unpleasant cause of coming at all—my anxiety to obtain professional advice for some morbid symptom on my only remaining *ear* (the other having declined its office many years since.) My apprehension of more than the possibility of wholly losing the services of the one that has remained faithful hitherto, and by which I have continued to get on tolerably for the last dozen years, is much alleviated by an assurance from the highest professional authority that there is not serious cause for such apprehension.

The removal of your brother to a scene and a condition of existence how transcendantly different! excited a pensive emotion in those of us who had seen him excited and animated in a social hour, even while confined to his bed. But another feeling mingled and even predominated—that which congratulated him in thought on his blessed exchange. In attending his quiet funeral (just such a one as I should wish for myself) I thought of the difference between such a close of life, such a calm affectionate conveyance of the remains to the grave, and *such a sequel elsewhere*, as compared with the death and pompous obsequies of some wicked, proud monarch or conqueror.

. . . . It is odd I should not, till now, have been reminded of *political* matters. Sad state of things—to result at no distant time, according to the auguries I am in the way of hearing, in great and perhaps terrific national calamity. No doubt God has a fearful controversy with a nation on the whole so irreligious and so immoral; and the infliction of a bad government bears strongly the marks of vengeance.

. . . . Besides the variety of sights, exhibitions, &c., to which I have paid a competent attention, I have necessarily become a little acquainted with some matters and things not unreservedly let out through the general public channels. The general effect of such information is, that the state of society is bad—bad beyond anything that even a cynical judge of human nature would antecedently surmise. A total want of moral principle in the vast majority of figuring persons is a very sad phenomenon. This is proved against one after another of them, even of some that one might have been disposed to think tolerably well of. A minor arraignment is, that of all sorts of perversity, folly, and absurdity, of opinion and prejudice; and religion! there might be no such thing recognized as in existence, except as an object of jeering reference, as embodied in a church and parsons. When I say “jeering,” I speak of the clever fellows of the “liberal” party, some of them in parliament, others the journalists, the literary adventurers, political economists, &c. A life spent much in the company of this sort of people would be very injurious to a man’s personal religion. . . .

. . . . In the first triumph of having obtained the Reform Bill, what augur would not have been scouted as an idiot, who had predicted that ten years of its operation would end in such an *election* as this!

I hope I shall be just able, after such an interval, to recognize the countenances of our few Bristol friends when I meet them again. I am saying “few;”—to me how *very* few, after the removals by death, and that gradual declining out of society, which has of late years been increasing my insulation. I earnestly wish that my diminishing communication with men may be replaced by more communication with Heaven.

Still, and again, and ever, wishing every blessing that such an imperfect state as this mortal sojourn must ever be, can admit, to yourself and Mrs. R., I remain, my dear sir,

Most truly yours,

J. FOSTER.

---

CCXXVI. TO A YOUNG MINISTER.

[In answer to one in which he stated his inquiries and difficulties on the subject of the eternity of future punishments.]

September 24, 1841.

DEAR SIR,—If you could have been apprised how much less research I have made into what has been written on the subject of your letter than

you appear to have done, you would have had little expectation of assistance in deciding your judgment. I have perhaps been too content to let an opinion (or impression) admitted in early life dispense with protracted inquiry and various reading. The general, not very far short of universal, judgment of divines in affirmation of the doctrine of eternal punishment must be acknowledged a weighty consideration. It is a very fair question, is it likely that so many thousands of able, learned, benevolent, and pious men should all have been in error? And the language of scripture is formidably strong; so strong that it must be an argument of extreme cogency that would authorize a limited interpretation.

Nevertheless, I acknowledge myself *not* convinced of the orthodox doctrine. If asked *why not?*—I should have little to say in the way of criticism, of implications found or sought in what may be called incidental expressions of scripture, or of the passages dubiously cited in favor of final, universal restitution. It is the moral argument, as it may be named, that presses irresistibly on my mind—that which comes in the stupendous idea of eternity.

It appears to me that the teachers and believers of the orthodox doctrine hardly ever make an earnest, strenuous effort to form a conception of eternity; or rather a conception somewhat of the nature of a faint incipient, approximation. Because it is confessedly beyond the compass of thought it is suffered to go without an attempt at thinking of it. They utter the term in the easy currency of language; have a vague and transitory idea of something obscurely vast, and do not labor to place and detain the mind in intense protracted contemplation, seeking all expedients for expanding and aggravating the awful import of such a word. Though every mode of illustration is feeble and impotent, one would surely think there would be an insuppressible impulse to send forth the thoughts to the utmost possible reach into the immensity—when it is an immensity into which our own most essential interests are infinitely extended. Truly it is very strange that even religious minds can keep so quietly aloof from the amazing, the overwhelming contemplation of what they have the destiny and the near prospect of entering upon.

Expedients of illustration of what eternity is *not*, supply the best attainable means of assisting remotely toward a glimmering apprehension of what it is. All that is within human capacity is to imagine the vastest measures of *time*, and to look to the termination of these as only touching the mere commencement of eternity.

For example: it has been suggested\* to imagine the number of particles, atoms, contained in this globe, and suppose them one by one annihilated, each in a thousand years, till all were gone; but just as well say, a million, or a million of millions of years or ages, it is all the same as against infinite duration.

Extend the thought of such a process to our whole mundane system, and finally to the whole material universe: it is still the same. Or, ima-

\* In the Spectator I think. (No. 575, *Monday, Aug. 2, 1714*.—Ed.)

gine a series of numerical figures, in close order, extended to a line of such a length that it would encircle the globe, like the equator—or that would run along with the earth's orbit round the sun—or with the outermost planet, Uranus—or that it would draw a circle of which the radius should be from the earth or sun to Sirius—or that should encompass the entire material universe, which, as being material, cannot be infinite. The most stupendous of these measure of *time* would have an end; and would, when completed, be still *nothing to eternity*.

Now think of an infliction of misery protracted through such a period, and at the end of it being only *commencing*,—not one smallest step nearer a conclusion:—the case just the same if that sum of figures were multiplied by itself. And then think of *man*—his nature, his situation, the circumstances of his brief sojourn and trial on earth. Far be it from us to make light of the demerit of sin, and to remonstrate with the supreme Judge against a severe chastisement, of whatever moral nature we may regard the infliction to be. But still, what is man?—He comes into the world with a nature fatally corrupt, and powerfully tending to actual evil. He comes among a crowd of temptations adapted to his innate evil propensities. He grows up (incomparably the greater proportion of the race) in great ignorance; his judgment weak, and under numberless beguilements into error; while his passions and appetites are strong; his conscience unequally matched against their power;—in the majority of men, but feebly and rudely constituted. The influence of whatever good instructions he may receive is counteracted by a combination of opposite influences almost constantly acting on him. He is essentially and inevitably unapt to be powerfully acted on by what is invisible and future. In addition to all which, there is the intervention and activity of the great tempter and destroyer. In short, his condition is such that there is no hope of him, but from a direct, special operation on him of what we denominate grace. *Is it not so? are we not convinced—is it not the plain doctrine of scripture—is there not irresistible evidence from a view of the actual condition of the human world,—that no man can become good, in the Christian sense, can become fit for a holy and happy place hereafter, but by this operation ab extra?* But this is arbitrary and discriminative on the part of the sovereign Agent, and independent of the will of man. And how awfully evident is it, that this indispensable operation takes place only on a comparatively small proportion of the collective race!

Now this creature, thus constituted and circumstanced, passes a few fleeting years on earth, a short sinful course; in which he does often what, notwithstanding his ignorance and ill-disciplined judgment and conscience, he knows to be wrong, and neglects what he knows to be his duty; and consequently, for a greater or less measure of guilt, widely different in different offenders, deserves punishment. But endless punishment! hopeless misery, through a duration to which the enormous terms above imagined, will be absolutely nothing! I acknowledge my inability

(I would say it reverently) to admit this belief, together with a belief in the divine goodness—the belief that “God is love,” that his tender mercies are over all his works. Goodness, benevolence, charity, as ascribed in supreme perfection to him, cannot mean a quality foreign to all human conceptions of goodness; it must be something analogous in principle to what himself has defined and required as goodness in his moral creatures, that, in adoring the divine goodness, we may not be worshipping an “unknown God.” But if so, how would all our ideas be confounded, while contemplating him bringing, of his own sovereign will, a race of creatures into existence, in such a condition that they certainly will and must,—*must*, by their nature and circumstances, go wrong, and be miserable unless prevented by especial grace,—which is the privilege of only a small proportion of them, and at the same time affixing on their delinquency a doom of which it is infinitely beyond the highest archangel’s faculty to apprehend a thousandth part of the horror.

It must be in deep humility that we venture to apply to the measures of the divine government, the rules indispensable to the equity of human administration. Yet we may advert to the principle in human legislation, that the man tempted to crime should, as far as is possible without actual experience, be apprised of the nature and measure of the penal consequence. It should be something the main force of which can be placed in intelligible *opposition*, so to speak, to the temptation. If it be something totally out of the scope of his faculties to apprehend, to realize to his mind, that *threatened something is unknown*, has not its appropriate fitness to deter him. There is, or may be, in it what would be of mighty force to deter him if *he could have a competent notion of it*; but his necessary ignorance precludes from him that salutary force. Is he not thus taken at a fearful disadvantage? As a motive to deter him the threatened penalty can only be in the proportion to his (in the present case) narrow faculty of apprehending it; but as an evil to be suffered it surpasses in magnitude every intellect but the Omniscient. Might we not imagine the reflection of one of the condemned delinquents suffering on, and still interminably on, through a thousand or a million of ages, to be expressed in some such manner as this:—Oh! if it had been possible for me to conceive but the most diminutive part of the weight and horror of this doom, every temptation to sin would have been enough to strike me dead with terror; I should have shrunk from it with the most violent recoil.

A common argument has been that sin is an *infinite evil*, that is, of infinite demerit, as an offence against an infinite Being; and that since a finite creature cannot suffer infinitely *in measure*, he must *in duration*. But surely, in all reason, the limited and in the present instance *diminutive nature of the criminal* must be an essential part of the case for judgment. Every act must, for one of its proportions, be measured by the nature and condition of the agent. And it would seem that one principle in that rule of proportion should be, that the offending agent should



be capable of being aware of the magnitude (the *amount*, if we might use such a word) of the offence he commits, by being capable of something like an adequate conception of the being against whom it is committed. A perverse child committing an offence against a great monarch, of whose dignity it *had some*, but a vastly inadequate, apprehension, would not be punished in the same manner as an offender of high endowments and responsibility, and fully aware of the dignity of the personage offended. The one would justly be sharply chastised; the other might as justly be condemned to death. In the present case, the offender does or may know that the Being offended against is of awful majesty; and therefore the offence is one of great aggravation, and he will justly be punished with great severity; but, by his extremely contracted and feeble faculties, as the lowest in the scale of strictly rational and accountable creatures in the whole creation, he is infinitely incapable of any adequate conception of the greatness of the Being offended against. He is, then, according to the argument, obnoxious to a punishment not in any proportion to his own nature, but alone to that infinity of the supreme nature, which is to him infinitely unconceivable and unknown.

If an evil act of a human being may be of infinite demerit, why may not a good one be of infinite excellence or merit as having also a reference to the infinite Being? Is it not plain that every act of a finite nature must have, in all senses, the finite quality of that nature—cannot, therefore, be of infinite demerit?

Can we—I would say with reverence—can we realize it as possible that a lost soul, after countless millions of ages, and in prospect of an interminable succession of such enormous periods, can be made to have the conviction, absolute and perfect, that all this is a just, an equitable infliction, and from a Power as *good* as he is just, for a few short sinful years on earth—years and sins presumed to be retained most vividly in memory, and everlastingly growing clearer, vaster, and more terrible to retrospective view in their magnitude of infinite evil—every stupendous period of duration, by which they have actually been left at a distance, seeming to bring them, in contrariety to all laws of memory, nearer and ever nearer to view, by the continually aggravated experience of their consequences?

Yes, those twenty, forty, seventy years, growing up to infinity of horror in the review, in proportion to the distance which the condemned spirit recedes from them;—all eternity not sufficing to reveal fully what those years contained!—millions of ages for each single evil thought or word!

But it is usually alleged that there will be an endless *continuance* of sinning, with probably an endless aggravation, and *therefore* the punishment must be endless. Is not this like an admission of disproportion between the punishment and the *original cause* of its infliction?—But suppose the case to be so,—that is to say, that the punishment is not a retribution *simply* for the guilt of the momentary existence on earth,

but a continued punishment of the continued, ever-aggravated guilt in the eternal state; the allegation is of no avail in vindication of the doctrine; because the first consignment to the dreadful state *necessitates a continuance of the criminality*; the doctrine teaching that it is of the essence, and is an awful aggravation, of the original consignment, that it dooms the condemned to maintain the criminal spirit unchanged for ever. The doom to *sin* as well as to suffer, and according to the argument, to sin in *order* to suffer, is inflicted as the punishment of the sin committed in the mortal state. Virtually, therefore, the eternal punishment is the punishment of the sins of time.

Under the light (or the darkness) of this doctrine, how inconceivably mysterious and awful is the aspect of the whole economy of this human world! The immensely greater number of the race hitherto, through all ages and regions, passing a short life under no illuminating, transforming influence of their Creator; ninety-nine in a hundred of them perhaps having never even received any authenticated message from heaven; passing off the world in a state unfit for a spiritual, heavenly, and happy kingdom elsewhere; and all destined to everlasting misery. The thoughtful spirit has a question silently suggested to it of far more emphatic import than that of him who exclaimed, "Hast thou made all men *in rain*?"

Even the dispensation of redemption by the Mediator, the only light that shines through this dark economy,—how profoundly mysterious in its slow progress, as yet, in its uncorrupted purity, and saving efficacy. What proportion of the earth's inhabitants are, at this hour, the subjects of its vital agency? It was not the divine volition that the success should be greater,—that a greater number should be saved by it,—or most certainly, most necessarily, its efficacy *would* have been greater. But in thus withholding from so large a proportion of mankind even the knowledge, and from so vast a majority in the nominally Christian nations the divine application, indispensable to the efficacy of the Christian dispensation, could it be that the divine purpose was to consign so many of his creatures, existing under such fearful circumstances, to the doom of eternal misery? Does the belief consist with any conception we can form of infinite goodness combined with infinite power?

But, after all this, we have to meet the grave question, *What say the Scriptures?* There is a force in their expressions at which we well may tremble. On *no* allowable interpretation do they signify less than a very protracted duration and formidable severity. But I hope it is not presumptuous to take advantage of the fact, that the terms everlasting, eternal, for ever, original or translated, are often employed in the Bible, as well as other writings, under great and various limitations of import; and are thus withdrawn from the predicament of *necessarily and absolutely* meaning a strictly endless duration. The limitation is often, indeed, plainly marked by the nature of the subject. In other instances the words are used with a figurative indefiniteness, which leaves the

limitation to be made by some general rule of reason and proportion. They are designed to magnify, to aggravate, rather than to define. My resource in the present case, then, is simply this—that since the terms do not necessarily and absolutely signify an interminable duration,—and since there is in the present instance to be pleaded, for admitting a limited interpretation, a reason in the moral estimate of things, of stupendous, of infinite urgency, involving our conceptions of the divine goodness and equity, and leaving those conceptions overwhelmed in darkness and horror if it be rejected, I therefore conclude that a limited interpretation is authorized. Perhaps there is some pertinence in a suggestion which I recollect to have seen in some old and nearly unknown book in favor of universal restitution;—that the great difference of *degrees* of future punishment, so plainly stated in Scripture, affords an argument against its perpetuity; since, if the demerit be infinite, there can be no place for a scale of degrees, apportioning a minor infliction to some offenders;—every one should be punished up to the utmost that his nature can sustain; and the same reason of equity there may be for a limited measure, there may consistently be for a limited duration. The assignment of an unlimited duration would seem an abandonment of the *principle* of the discriminating rule observed in the adjustment of degrees.

If it be asked, *how could* the doctrine have been more plainly and positively asserted than it is in the Scripture language? In answer, I ask, how do we construct our words and sentences to express it in an absolute manner, so as to leave no *possibility* of understanding the language in a different, equivocal, or questionable sense? And may we not think that if so transcendently dreadful a doctrine had been meant to be stamped as in burning characters on our faith, there would have been such forms of proposition, of circumlocution if necessary, as would have rendered all doubt or question a mere palpable absurdity?

Some intelligent and devout inquirers, unable to admit the terrific doctrine, and yet pressed by the strength of the scripture *language*, have had recourse to a *literal* interpretation of the threatened destruction, the eternal death, as signifying *annihilation of existence*, after a more or less protracted penal infliction. Even this would be a prodigious relief: but it is an admission that the terms in question *do* mean something final, in an absolute sense. I have not directed much thought to this point; the grand object of interest being a negation of the perpetuity of misery. I have not been anxious for any satisfaction beyond *that*; though certainly one would wish to indulge the hope, founded on the divine attribute of infinite benevolence, that there will be a period somewhere in the endless futurity, when all God's sinning creatures will be restored by him to rectitude and happiness.

It often surprises me that the fearful doctrine sits, if I may so express it, so easy on the minds of the religious and benevolent believers of it. Surrounded immediately by the multitudes of fellow-mortals, and looking abroad on the present, and back on the past state of the race, and regard-

ing them, as to the immense majority, as subjects of so direful destination, how *can* they have any calm enjoyment of life, how can they be cordially cheerful, how can they escape the incessant haunting of dismal ideas, darkening the economy in which their lot is cast? I remember suggesting to one of them such an image as this:—suppose the case that so many of the great surrounding population as he could not, even in a judgment of charity, believe to be Christians, that is, to be in a safe state for hereafter,—suppose the case to be that he knew so many were all doomed to suffer, by penal infliction, a death by torture, in the most protracted agony, with what feelings would he look on the populous city, the swarming country, or even a crowded, mixed congregation? But what an infinitesimal trifle that would be in comparison with what he does believe in looking on these multitudes. How, then, can they bear the sight of the living world around them?

As to religious teachers; if the tremendous doctrine be true, surely it ought to be almost continually proclaimed as with the blast of a trumpet, inculcated and reiterated, with ardent passion, in every possible form of terrible illustration; no remission of the alarm to thoughtless spirits. What! believe them in such unconceivably dreadful peril, and not multiply and aggravate the terrors to frighten them out of their stupor; deploring still, that all the horrifying representations in the power of thought and language to make, are immeasurably below the real urgency of the subject; and almost wishing that some appalling phenomenon of sight or sound might break in to make the impression that no words can make. If we saw a fellow-mortal stepping heedlessly or daringly on the utmost verge of some dreadful precipice or gulf, a humane spectator would raise and *continue* a shout, a scream, to prevent him. How then can it comport with the duty of preachers to satisfy themselves with brief, occasional references to this awful topic, when the most prolonged thundering alarm is but as the note of an infant, a bird, or an insect, in proportion to the horrible urgency of the case?

There has been, in some quarters, what appears to me a miserably fallacious way of talking, which affects to dissuade from dwelling on such terrifying representations. They have said, These terrors tend only to harden the mind; approach the thoughtless beings rather, and almost exclusively, with the milder suaves, the gentle language of love. I cannot, of course, *mean* to say, that this also is not to be one of the expedients and of frequent application. But I do say, that to make this the main resource is not in consistency with the spirit of the bible, in which the larger proportion of what is said of sinners and addressed to them, is *plainly in a tone of menace* and alarm. Strange if it had been otherwise, when a righteous Governor was speaking to a depraved, rebellious race. Also it is matter of fact and experience, that it is very far oftener by impressions on fear that men are actually awakened to flee from the wrath to come. Let any one recall what he has known of such awakenings. Dr. Watts, all mild and amiable as he was, and de-

lighted to dwell on the congenial topics, says deliberately, that of all the persons to whom his ministry had been efficacious, *only one* had received the first effectual impressions from the gentle and attractive aspects of religion; all the rest from the awful and alarming ones—the appeals to fear. And this is all but universally the manner of the divine process of conversion.

A number (not large, but of great piety and intelligence) of ministers within my acquaintance, several now dead, have been disbelievers of the doctrine in question; at the same time not feeling themselves imperatively called upon to make a public disavowal; content with employing in their ministrations strong general terms in denouncing the doom of impenitent sinners. For one thing, a consideration of the unreasonable imputations and unmeasured suspicions apt to be cast on any publicly declared partial defection from rigid orthodoxy, has made them think they should better consult their usefulness by not giving a prominence to this dissentient point; while yet they make no concealment of it in private communications, and in answer to serious inquiries. When, besides, they have considered how strangely defective and feeble is the efficacy, to alarm and deter careless, irreligious minds, of the terrible doctrine itself notionally admitted by them, they have thought themselves the less required to propound one that so greatly qualifies the blackness of the prospect. They could not be unaware of the grievous truth of what is so strongly insisted on as an argument by the defenders of the tenet,—that thoughtless and wicked men would be sure to seize on the mitigated doctrine to encourage themselves in their impenitence. But this is only the same perverse and fatal use that they make of the doctrine of grace and mercy through Jesus Christ. If they *will* so abuse the truth we cannot help it.—But methinks even this fact tells against the doctrine in question. If the very nature of man, as created, every individual, by the sovereign Power, be in such desperate disorder, that there is no possibility of conversion and salvation except in the instances where that Power interposes with a special and redeeming efficacy, how can we conceive that the main proportion of the race thus morally impotent (that is, really and absolutely impotent) will be eternally punished for the inevitable result of this moral impotence? But this I have said before.

With all good wishes for the success of your studies and ministrations, I am, dear sir, yours truly,

J. F.

---

CCXXVII. TO THE REV. ROBERT AINSLIE.

[On Socialist publications.]

*Stapleton, September 16, 1839*

DEAR SIR,—I am truly obliged for the packet from you, forwarded to me by Mr. Wills; though I confess that no envelope, of paper or any other

substance, ever brought me anything so repulsively nauseous—a perfect moral *assafutida*.

As to the object for which it is sent to me;\* I did endeavor to make my answer unequivocal when you favored me with a short visit here. To answer a polite and estimable man, intent purely on a benevolent purpose, with the blunt, curt, impatient, “No, I will not,”—“say no more,” is very ungracious to the feeling of both parties. I had to plead off in such shifts of language as *intended* this meaning, without rudely *saying* it.

A man necessarily best knows what his situation is, and what are his aptitudes and abilities (rather I should say, in this case, *inabilities*) for any given task.

For one thing, as to *time*. Your letter says “a few days.” Now I have the mortification to confess to you, that to compose a short essay on the subject named would take me *months*, literally and certainly months, and not the lowest, or nearly the lowest, number in this plural term. With a mind of slower operation than any I ever knew that *could* operate at all, and with eyes that painfully recoil from much reading, and a memory that hardly retains anything that I do read, I should have (for the purpose of making a tract of say twenty pages) to go about reading, comparing, selecting, digesting, and trying to condense—with such an amount of still unsatisfactory labor as no one can imagine for me. There would be no idle pride or vanity of doing the thing well; but without such a hard and slow labor I should have no feeling that it *was* done well. And for the labor of composition I have, and I may say always have had, a very great repugnance—often an extreme and almost invincible repugnance: whether this be a fault, I know not; but it is an obstacle, and in part a disability.

As another thing—for any small matter that I may think I can perform in the writing way, I am at present under a positive obligation, to which I am so ill responding that I am mortified and ashamed.

It strikes me that it must be a great advantage for addressing the classes in question, on any of the proposed topics, that the writer should be one of those who have the opportunity of a direct or very near acquaintance with the parties to be dealt with, in order to be aware of the *particular ways* in which their minds are perverted, of their sort of notions, feelings and talk, the tempers they manifest, the modes of evasion, the signs they give of sincerity (in the coarse sense of the word) or of insincerity. The general argument may thus have many special adaptations, according to characters and circumstances. It is obvious that this can be much better done by an observant person who is in the close neighborhood of the parties, so as to have something approaching to an immediate knowledge of their current sayings and doings—as Mr. Giles

\* Mr. Foster had been requested to write a tract on “The Existence of God,” for the London City Mission.

has been in the north, and as some of your intelligent friends probably are in London.

The gross stupidity, together with the desperate, reckless impiety, manifested in some of the pieces they are circulating, seem to preclude all hope of doing them any good. The thing seems like a moral epidemic, breathed from hell, destined to be permitted for a time to sweep a portion of the people to destruction, in defiance of all remedial interference. They are a doomed race, and their destiny will be accomplished. Still it is right that means should be tried, if it were merely that good men should evince their own fidelity to the good cause, fulfilling a duty which is such independently of any calculation of results.

Unless I had been in a condition to render the small requested contribution of aid, it will seem a cheap and thankless kind of benevolence for me to say that I greatly applaud and admire the system of operations in which you are so meritoriously concerned. It is, however, a true though valueless tribute. I am, dear sir,

Yours, very respectfully,

J. FOSTER.

CCXXVIII. TO J. COTTLE, ESQ.

*Stapleton, Tuesday, January, 1842.*

MY DEAR SIR,—I am not pleased with myself for not having, long since, sent a line of grateful acknowledgment to you and Mrs. Hare, for one kind favor following another. I am afraid an extra lazy habit will have been superinduced by several weeks of lying nearly all the time in bed. If I had had any urgent business or vocation I should not have been allowed to delay till within a few days back the practice of rising soon after breakfast. In making any trial of myself, in any way of exertion, I suppose the proof of my not having risen yet to the accustomed level would be a failure of strength. Otherwise I feel nearly what we denominate *well*. . . . All about me have been most assiduously kind; and a friend's daughter, who has been with us all the while, and can read on interminably without physical injury or uneasiness (which my girls cannot), has read through I know not how many volumes to me.

In returning toward the accustomed mode of life, the question will be how soon to leave the confinement to one warm room for the other parts of the house,—and the open air without the house. The winter is an untoward season for such experiment—the latter experiment. But while I am writing “winter,” a warm splendid sunshine is falling over my table and room, giving a pleasing intimation of spring not very far off.

How many returning springs you and I have seen, how few more; at the very utmost, shall we stay to see! There is a land where, in a much higher sense, “everlasting spring abides, and never-withering flowers.” May almighty grace work and refine our souls to a fitness for that happy region of our Father and our Redeemer's kingdom.

This time of confinement has been to me one of very serious exercise of mind. A deep sense of guilt has attended the review of life,—a life so very, very imperfectly devoted to our great Master's service. So much lukewarmness, so little zealous service, so much indolent self-indulgence. I have profoundly felt how sad and hopeless a condition but for that blessed and all-sufficient resource, the atonement, accomplished by Him who offered himself without spot to God.—I cannot comprehend the *fortitude* with which, under a rejection of this our only hope, a conscious sinner can dare to look forward to hereafter. I have been highly gratified to hear favorable accounts of your health, as being in some respects, especially your eyes, better than in past years. How little, at some seasons, did you anticipate staying so long in this world. Wise is the Sovereign appointment, for those who stay, and—for those who go.

My thoughts are often pensively turning on the enumeration of those I may call my co-evals, and many of them of long acquaintance, who have been called away within a very few years. An old and much valued friend at Worcester, from whose funeral I returned little more than in time to attend that of our estimable Mr. Hare. Since then, your excellent sister,—Mr. Coles of Bourton, known and esteemed almost forty years,—Mr. Addington,—lately in Scotland, the worthy Mr. Dove,—and now, last of all, and so unexpectedly, Mr. Roberts. . . .

CCXXIX. TO THE REV. T. GRINFIELD, M.A.

*Stapleton, February 19, 1842.*

MY DEAR SIR,—I have cause to be highly gratified by the friendly *manœuvre* devised to put me in possession of the view of Snowdon. It is less *faded* than your description had led me to surmise. There appears to be no obliteration of even the finest lines, not even those slight ones, denominated *interlines*, traced between the stronger cuts of the graver. . . . I add this print with great pleasure, both for its own and the friendly giver's sake, to my accumulation of *Woollett's*, numbering to about fifty, and including very nearly all his engravings. I need not say that this has been the consequence of *mousing* for them during a good many years,—watching and catching the occurrence of any of them, within my very narrow local sphere of such opportunities. The superlative excellence of *Woollett's* workmanship seemed to warrant this sort of avarice.

But for this, and the other large accumulations, how many times I have called myself a *fool*!—money expended, to an excess beyond all sober prudence in a person of my limited means—liability to damage, from careless handling, mildew, &c., &c. . . . I thank you for this well-engraved portrait of Wilson. I have not seen it before. I have a good portrait of Woollett, to place it beside. Never were two artists more fortunate in each other. . . .



## CCXXX. TO JOHN PURSER, ESQ.

*Stapleton, Feb. 22, 1842.*

. . . . When it is considered that the object (in theory) of government is the prevention and castigation of iniquity, it is striking and melancholy to see how much of that very iniquity may go into the manner of constituting and administering that same government. For example, the recent Dublin election. There cannot be one right-thinking, virtuous man in England whose blood has not almost boiled at the account of the complicated villainies of that business. . . . But that we have a parliament, for a very large part of it, got together very much by the same sort of means, one should be confident that so vile a job will be flung over. . . .

. . . . In my retired life here I see extremely few persons who are under the full excitement of the present great national interests, because I see very few persons of any sort ; but intelligence of the wide and deep agitation pours in through every channel ; would it might become such an earthquake as to overturn and prostrate the hateful domination with which the nation is cursed. The aristocratic ascendancy care nothing for the destitution and misery under which so vast a number of human beings are sinking to the dust, literally to the grave ; their own selfish advantages held fast while they see the national resources fast draining away ; and the last power of effrontery asserting that their monopoly is not at all, or only in a trifling degree, the cause of that ruin of commerce which is depriving hundreds of thousands of the means of exercising their industry in order to live, and millions of the means of living otherwise than in the most abject penury.

We are not now, like the ancient Jews, living under a dispensation of special Providence, manifested often in speedy vindictive visitation on oppressors of the poor ; but one can hardly help thinking that some strong mark of the divine judgment will yet fall, in this life, on at least the chiefs in this iniquity. And in such an event, very slowly will compassion be drawn toward any calamity that may be inflicted on them. "They shall have judgment without mercy who have showed no mercy." The case with them is, not only that they are rolling and rioting in wealth and luxury, *while* a vast multitude are sinking to the lowest depth of penury and misery, but that they obstinately and scornfully maintain, as a chief expedient for that wealth and luxury, the very thing which is a chief cause of that deep and wide, and still widening misery. Ireland has heretofore been the first in our thoughts and references as a scene of popular wretchedness ; but now the most immediate and engrossing spectacle glares upon us in England. Yet I have not forgotten M. De Beaumont's description of Ireland, and estimate of its odious and incorrigible aristocracy.

What a contrast to the moral aspect of Ireland, is its natural scenery, so abundant and various in all that is beautiful and grand. We have

been reading with great pleasure (as to this latter view of the country), the successive numbers of Mr. and Mrs. Hall's traverse of your island; a pleasure, suffering, as in all such cases, the drawback of considering the difference between reading and actually seeing. A few, very few of the remarkable places, indeed, I have the remembrance of having seen—as the Hill of Howth, the Dargle, the Glen of the Downs, the Devil's Glen; and the general appearance of the Wicklow mountains. You may perhaps hardly recollect to have heard that once your excellent father, H. Strahan, and myself, made an excursion on foot to some of those romantic places, with an exertion of bodily strength how far beyond anything I could perform now.

I hope you do not yet feel a very marked decline in this same "natural force," though the troop of stout fellows and fine girls around you or belonging to you, may, if there were no other memento, remind you that the green age is far gone away. One can very seldom congratulate, without much deduction and reserve, the father of a numerous grown up and nearly grown up family. Yours appears to be the remarkable and felicitous case in which there needs no such reserve, and most cordially do I rejoice with you that it is so. . . .

For at least fifty years, I have never been confined to bed for a single day, till within the last two months, during the greater part of which I have been confined to a room, and for a considerable number of days, nearly to bed, by a cold and cough of a very severe and obstinate kind. I have now nearly regained my usual health, and am only waiting for a warm day to venture out of the house, just such a day as I have never forgotten, a first of January in Dublin, in I wonder what far off year of the time for ever gone, I walked on the quays in a warm delightful sunshine.

I may guess that neither you nor Mrs. P. are much in the habit of "taking walks," for walking's sake. If you ever do so, which of the two has the advantage in point of physical strength? How much I should like to be the third in an amble by the grand canal—or on any other path or ground. . . .

---

CCXXXI. TO THE REV. JOSIAH HILL.

*Stapleton, May, 1842.*

. . . . Another house, which I have frequented many years, is finally closed against me. You have heard mention of Mr. Wade, near the Hotwells, Coleridge's friend. I attended his funeral on Monday morning. He had been as well as usual a fortnight before, but walked a great deal on one of the hottest days, sometimes with his hat off as he often did. The consequence was a severe illness, which the medical man (whom he would not for several days admit) pronounced from the time he saw him, fatal. For nearly a week I heard nothing of it. And when I went to see him, he was evidently near death, which took place

two or three days after. He was in a state of stupor, and unable to speak. I thought he recognized me just for a moment; as indicated by a slight transient smile. I do not remember how or when I became acquainted with him, many years since. I had always found him extremely kind and hospitable. For years I had dined with him about once a month, usually in the company of Roberts, to whom he had been a faithful friend, and an attendant on his ministry. A few months before his death he made me a present of a very splendid set of engravings which had cost him thirty pounds. His age was eighty-one. He was not a literary nor properly speaking an intellectual man; it having been from mere generous good-will to a man floating loose on society, that he had, some forty years since, put his house and purse at the free service of Coleridge, and partly his associates. He was wholly a man of business all his life, till he retired about a dozen years since. He left considerable property, which goes chiefly to relations who cared but little about him. He did not make formally what we denominate a profession of religion, but there were favorable indications in the manner in which he expressed himself in his illness. I am not quite self-satisfied, for not having sometimes more expressly introduced religion in our conversations. They turned most on that various knowledge of the world, which his long and diversified experience of it supplied. On his strict uniform integrity, I never heard a syllable of imputation or doubt. Reckoning up lately, I found him to be the eleventh individual of old acquaintance carried off within the last three years and a half, several of them beyond my own age, the others not many years short of it, so that there remain actually but three or four of you that are about my co-evals. . . . Emphatically admonition upon admonition to prepare for the removal. . . .

---

CCXXXII. TO THE REV. DR HARRIS.

*Stapleton, September 13, 1842.*

MY DEAR SIR,—In apology for so long a delay in acknowledging your valuable and elegant present of "The Great Commission," I have to plead, partly as an effect of the intense heat, and partly as a consequence of a debilitating indisposition, a state of my eyes extremely inconvenient for reading and writing. Certainly I ought to have immediately informed you of the safe conveyance of the book, leaving it to a future time to take the liberty of making any slight observations, if there should occur to me any such as I could think at all worth your attention. But I indolently let myself be assured that you would not suspect any failure in the conveyance.

I only say what I have said to every one with whom I have spoken of the book, when I express my admiration of the eloquence, the comprehension, the inexhaustible invention, the power of turning to account both invention and knowledge, and the energy and general precision of language.

If I might venture any hint on a lower key, it would perhaps be,—a tendency to diffuseness, or call it amplification, exuberance. The writer luxuriates in his opulence, sometimes diluting a little the effect which a little more brevity and compression might have sooner and more simply produced. Not that if I were asked to note any parts or passages better omitted, I should know where to point; it is all to the purpose; only I may fancy that a somewhat less multifarious assemblage of ideas would converge more pointedly to that purpose.

A reviewer, I remember, wished that the introductory section, the philosophical speculation, had been omitted. I should hardly say so; it is very curious, and clearly stated and illustrated; though not indispensably necessary to the main object. Philosophy does go into a startling theory of the far-spreading, complicated, interminable succession of effects, both in the physical and moral constitution of the world; making everything and all things perpetually operative, as both effects and causes, to the end of time, and immeasurably into space. Proximate dependences and sequences are obvious and important. And it may be assumed that effects of great moment may come somewhere hereafter, in the long concatenation and wide ramification, proceeding as consequences from what may now appear trivial things. But no man will *practically* believe the theory, in the unlimited terms of its exposition. No man will realize to himself or care to think, that the present state of his mind is the result of millions of agencies, brought down upon him in strict succession of cause and effect; or will hold himself under any responsibility for the future millions to follow and operate somewhere, some time, from everything he does and says. A curious paragraph is quoted from Babbage by Dr. Pye Smith. A captured negro is flung alive into the sea in the middle passage. From his last gurgle, proceeds an effect (an actual physical effect) which extends over the ocean, carrying to every solitary shore a disposition against the crime. A man destitute of science should speak with modesty; but I confess I have no power to believe that the disturbance of a square yard of water shall propagate a movement that shall make its way, and in numberless directions, through all the turbulence and infinite confusion, and conflicts of the element all over its countless leagues.\* But to the book. You will not wonder if a man

\* Of course, the truth involved in this particular illustration, and in the general law which it illustrates, is not supposed to be measurable or appreciable by the coarse instruments of human science. As a mathematical truth, however, it is demonstrable; being based on one of the fundamental axioms of dynamics—that action and reaction are equal. As a moral truth, the doctrine involved—the indestructibility of moral influences—is, though on different grounds, equally undeniable. In an all-related and progressive system, no such influence or element having once found admission, can, in every sense, cease to exist. The system can never again be, as it would have been if that element had never come into it. Each particular influence blends with the ever-augmenting sum of influences, the whole of which is to be finally accounted for. Whether or not a man “will hold himself under any responsibility for the future millions [of effects] to

dried and chilled by seventy years, addicted through experience, if not somewhat given by temperament, to sombre meditations; compelled to look much on the dark side, presented, as it is, in immensely greater breadth, in history and the actual state of the world, than the bright one, should think he perceives a pervading tone of exaggeration. The author surveys the whole scene before him, under the gladsome light of an orient and a vernal sun.

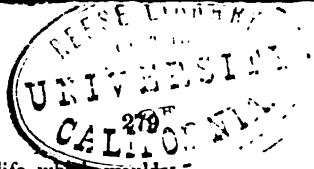
It has occurred to me to imagine a parallel representation carried on step by step with the Essayist, by such a man as I will describe. He shall be an earnest lover of truth, a decided believer in Christianity, a clear and impartial thinker (as far as impartiality is an attainable thing), and of ample information. He shall not be repelled into a temper of opposition by what he may deem excessive in the language and the expectations of missionary advocates. "*Valeat quantum*," he will say,—not in the affectation of candor, but in simple justice. But he shall say,—“Let us have the plain positive truth, the matter-of-fact reality, divested of the fallacies of rhetoric, of all factitious excitements, and of everything which we must in conscientious judgment ascribe to enthusiasm.”

This man accompanies the eloquent and sanguine missionary advocate, in his wide geographical tour, to all the places where the missionary cause is in operation, and to those where there is the loudest call for its introduction, or the most favorable circumstances for its reception. And since that cause, in all its proclamations, claims the whole world as its rightful domain, for its activity and its calculation of ultimate effect, he is authorized to make his estimates and proportions according to that great scale.

He goes, shall we say, to the North American Indians, a race plainly doomed to become extinct, except some diminutive relic, as being irre-

follow and to operate somewhere, some time, from everything he does or says,” will depend on his mental and moral constitution and habits. If I believe that the indestructibleness of moral influences is a doctrine of the word of God, I can hardly conceive of a more affecting *practical* consideration than that all the effects which I voluntarily originate are, in a scripture sense, “works,” some of which “go before” me into eternity to meet me on my arrival there; and others of which will “follow after” at an indefinite interval, bringing with them all the fruits which, during that interval, they have contributed to produce. The attenuated feebleness and inappreciable subtlety of many of the influences in question, are admitted; as well as the speed with which they pass beyond our power of tracing them, the apparently inextricable manner in which they become complicated with other elements of a similar nature, and the fact that no man will be held accountable for *all* the effects to the production of which his influence has tended. But these considerations do not affect the truth of the doctrine, nor should they abate its practical power. Their only proper effect seems to be that of making us feel more deeply the necessity of that final judgment in which the chemistry of the moral atmosphere shall be perfectly analysed, and of enlarging our views of that Omniscience which will then account for every particle of the whole, and apportion to every one who has breathed it his just award.

J. H.



claimably wild, instinctively averse to any mode of life which would admit even a protracted *attention* to Christian truth. And he will ask, what is the real proportionate amount of the Christian effect produced, in present or past time, on this ill-fated, forlorn race? And what are the circumstances, what is the value of the circumstances, affording a presumption of future success?

Next, he may as well go from the western coast, across the Pacific, to China, with its two or three hundred or more millions (Japan, with its 30,000,000, he may not even touch). What is the effect here, taken in cool statistics, and what are the auspices? How many times ten, out of these hundreds of millions, have received Christianity into their minds, plainly understanding it, and feeling its spiritual and moral power—after the long labors of a number of very able and indefatigable men? And of what width, accurately measured, are those crevices and cracks which are deemed to promise a practicable breach in that mental wall around them, which has been proved of far more solid and enduring consistence than the massive and immense structure of stone which encircles their empire?

On his route to India our surveyor may take Tartary to the north, with its tribes and hordes of barbarians, and may cast a glance over at the semi-paganism of a large portion of the nominally Greek church; or he may take a southward sweep by the Archipelago, Malacca, Siam, &c.; and in his traverse through those realms of darkness, a faint glimmer on some spot or two, a little taper, as it were, will tell him all the difference between the present condition and the profoundest night.

In the lower part of India, he *will* find a tangible effect of long and multifarious missionary exertions. But after an expanded view over a hundred millions, it is with a depressed feeling that he wishes and tries to make out a list of one thousand genuine converts from paganism; including all the deceased. The greatest number of those who renounce idoltry pass into a sort of *deism*, little less hostile than paganism itself to Christianity. He sees with pleasure an *alterative* process, gradually corroding the old system on the southern border, and a relaxing power of the superstition, to a certain extent, into the country; but is quite incredulous of anything like a general readiness and movement to break from it. It belongs not to human nature to make other than a very slow and difficult escape from an inveterate, complex, comprehensive superstition, which pervades the whole economy of sentiment and life.

Carrying forward with him the large portion of Mahomedanism in India, to be reckoned into the formally Mahomedan empire, our moral surveyor sees the prophet in such absolute and hitherto impregnable domination, that he asks, what *miracle* that is to be which is destined to break it up.

The *Jewish* people he will pass by, much in the same manner as an explorer of a continent would touch and leave the border of a tract of hopelessly sterile wilderness. And there is the vast interior of Africa!

In concluding this circuit round the globe, made in company with the missionary geographer, he will make account, willingly and gladly, of what has been done and is doing, and of all the real signs and omens of a brightening future. But he will still insist, "Let us, for the present at least, keep faithfully to proportion and reality." And then, to how many splendid and almost tumultuary celebrations may there be in a low, and, as it were, distant sound, an echo that mutters "the day of small things." And as to the wide-spread agitation, mobility, and upheaving restlessness which is disturbing the old order of things, and is represented as having an almost directly *religious* tendency, as if all nations were simultaneously awakening from their long and deep stupor, and passionately crying out for a true religion, he cannot help thinking there is an excessive indulgence of excited imagination. How many voices, of intelligent meaning, in this cry? how many from China and the contiguous regions? how many from Northern Asia and India? how many from Persia, from Interior Africa, from the whole Moslem world;—from the papal dominions in Austria, Hungary, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Central and South America?

He may be old enough to have lived through the whole course of the most prodigious and overturning commotion, that, for many ages, has shaken and convulsed the world; and he deplures to see how small in proportion the result, as to any unequivocal aid or impulsion to the cause of Christianity.

Why do I say, and so prolixly, all this? Certainly not from a perverse disposition to depreciate what is real and true, in fact or in prospect; but to intimate that there may be a very material difference between the amount of what is strictly real and true, and the magnified and ambitious conception that would be formed from an elated eloquence; and to suggest, that it may be useful sometimes to recover from that fascination to a calm and exact estimate.

. . . . I must ask indulgence to my writing in an unconnected and fragmentary way; for it is going much aside from any line of connection if I notice here, that part of your doctrine which inculcates, for the support of the missionary system, such a restrictive economy of general *expenditure*, as would exclude everything that could be adjudged a superfluity. Now is it not obvious, that in the present, or anything like the present, constitution of society, a practical conformity to this rule would have a calamitous consequence?

I have sometimes imagined a zealous advocate of missions, enforcing on a large assembly this law in application to particulars; taking the licence of specifying them by name in order to make the application express and pointed. He shall, for instance, denounce all decorative furniture; condemn all unnecessary diversity of dresses; and any quality of the necessary ones beyond plainness and cheapness—*silks*, probably, to be renounced, all of elaborate and ornamental texture certainly; condemn the wares of the silversmith, and even the watchmaker, observing

that a pinchbeck watch-case will do just as well as a silver one—gold not even to be thought of;—put a *very* close restriction, amounting to a prohibition, except in very special cases, of *carriages*;—prohibit supernumerary books, engravings, &c., &c., &c.

Well, the next day he calls for a subscription, on, say, the linen-draper, mercer, hatter, or tailor (and, observe, these classes contribute more *in proportion* to beneficent purposes than richer men). What will the mercer, draper, cabinet-maker, &c., say to him? “Sir, you must not come to me; for, if your injunctions were to take full effect, my business, the support of my family, and from which I have afforded something to your cause, would be broken up.” If in London, let him take his answer from a Spitalfields manufacturer. As to the coach-builder, he may dismiss immediately nine or ten of his hands to seek employment and bread in some other business equally cut down. It is plain that society must fall in pieces, unless maintained by a miracle.

If it should occur to any one to allege that the fitting out of missionary enterprises, on a great scale, would itself bring into action a considerable portion of employment and trade, we have only to ask, whence are the tradesmen and workmen to be *paid*, but from the missionary funds—and those funds, whence to be supplied? The expenditure is mainly absorbed by a far-off field, whence no return is to be expected, except in the distant contingency of a prosperous commerce with the remote regions being created through the civilizing effect of the missionary establishments.

By such an omnivorous requisition of the missionary cause, the middle and lower classes of the religious public would be reduced very much below a *mere inability to contribute*; it would be, as to a great number, *an inability to live*.\* Allow me a few sentences on that which forms the

\* If I had replied to these remarks in a spirit of respectful and amicable controversy—a kind of reply, however, which, as will be seen at the close of the letter, Mr. Foster deprecated—I might, perhaps, have said something to the following effect:—Your train of remark on Christian expenciture, considering “the present constitution of society,” contains very much of affecting truth. Nor am I aware that in anything I have said or written on the subject, I have even given utterance to sentiments avowedly, or even by fair implication, at variance with it. My chief design has been to show, not that the sumptuary habits of Christians are wrong, allowing the present constitution of society to be right, but that this constitution itself is materially at issue with the Word of God; and, consequently, that the Christian has to choose between inflaming the evil, by his conformity to the particular usages of society in question, and the opposite course of correcting them by making some approximation to the scriptural requirements of self-denial.

You say, that the trade classes “contribute more *in proportion* to beneficent purposes than richer men.” They do so, and the important fact involves, as it appears to me, the condemnation of that state of things which you view with so lenient an eye. For, in the first place, if the fact implies anything, it implies that as the tradesman becomes rich, he will contribute less proportionately to benevolent objects than he did before; a result which I do not see that, in your principles, you could condemn. For, secondly, if you went to him to remonstrate on the obvious inconsistency



essence and prominence of your theory—the asserted obligation of all Christians to send forth, to throw out, if I may so express it, the whole soul, with all its faculties, passions, affections, to go into an extraneous and foreign interest and agency; passing forward, onward, in unremitting impulse and expansion, to indefinite remoteness. This was the spirit

of his liberality diminishing in proportion to the increase of his wealth, he might justly reply, "Sir, you must not come to me; for if your remonstrance were to take full effect in the reduction of my expenses, my tradesmen would have less to give. I may be told, indeed, that I shall be held responsible by the Supreme for not enlarging my charities in proportion to the increase of my means; that I am robbing myself of much true and refining enjoyment in not being my own almoner; and that I cannot be surprised if my tradesmen imitate my example, and spend their gains exclusively on themselves, with the excuse that the class below them will have so much the more to give; and if that lower class again should adopt the same course—pleading that which is right for me cannot be wrong for them. In a word, acting on your principle, I have less than ever to contribute to the great objects which you advocate; and I rather expected that you would remonstrate with me for not having spent the whole." Now I do not see what you could say consistently in reply. For if you tell me that your remarks only go the length of implying that all the decorations and superfluities of the rich must not be given up, or the tradesman will have nothing to impart to charitable objects, I might rejoin, that I only imply that, unless some limit be assigned to these superfluities, the rich will have nothing to impart, and will be doing all that example can do to lead the classes below them to be as self-indulging and all-absorbing as themselves. While you, therefore, are saying to me, in effect, "Take care, or the tradesman will not have the means of giving;" I am only saying to you, in effect, "Take care, or, with the increase of his gains, there will be such an increase of his personal expenditure as to reduce the proportional amount of his liberality; while the rich will consider themselves exempt from consecrating more than the *minimum* of their property to God."

Now, dear Sir, for which of the two cautions is there the greater necessity? Is the danger on the side of too great self-denial, or too little? For about six thousand years it has been, you will admit, rather on the side of the too little. And, judging from present indications, the danger of its becoming too great is at least six thousand years in the future. Indeed, the sumptuary habits in question—the only ones which I have ever decried—are admitted on all hands to be on the increase. It is not an evil that cures itself by excess. Its "appetite grows by that it feeds on." Every new prospect of getting wealth, gives the demon power to take more entire possession of the soul. Hence the railroad mania, by which many of the religious have been "possessed," as well as those who make little or no pretensions to religion.

Nor does the evil resulting from these habits limit its effects to the reduction of the Christian treasury. If the newspaper and periodical press is to be relied on, the name of the evil is "Legion," and its effects everywhere, "grinding the face of the poor," giving to them the lowest wages possible, exacting from their bones and sinews as much labor as can be got, without quite breaking up the human machine at once; allowing to one or two millions of "white slaves" no leisure, and grudging them their little rest, and necessitating a state of brutalizing "Popular Ignorance," a description of which you have burnt into the minds of your readers. Those evils are only some of the natural progeny of that ever-exacting principle of selfishness, which robs the altar of God for its own table, crying, "Give! give!" and is never satisfied.

J. H.

indispensable to an apostle, and not a little of it is to an effective missionary. But I own my inability to conceive the general realization of such an order of sentiment in the minds of religious men as possible, without a recasting of humanity and society into a most unnatural and factitious shape, or even as compatible with a due and faithful attention to what is to men, as individuals, the one greatest interest. The chief concern of each one is his own final happiness. Indeed what is the object of the missionary cause itself but just this—to bring men as individuals to become earnestly intent on their own salvation? It is to fix each of them there, as the primary object, and not instantly to start them off as so many missionaries to others, as if the good obtained were to be realized rather in the transmission than in the possession. The concern for the welfare of others is to come as a secondary effect of the converting grace.

And looking at the condition of the generality of good men among ourselves, I can conceive an order of feeling and reflection in many of them nearly such as I may suppose one of them to express—"I wish well to the missionary cause, and have contributed something in aid, from my limited means, drawn upon as they are in so many different ways. But before I can send out my whole soul in a passionate concern for the remote tribes of the earth, to glow with ardor unabating on the other side of the globe, I must have a less onerous pressure at home, in the concerns of—that soul itself. There is the endless conflict with its corrupt nature, to be maintained often with indignant and melancholy emotions. There are the pains and apprehensions of conscious guilt; the temptations and the besetting sin; the defectiveness of my faith, and the difficulty of maintaining a devotional spirit. There is, in short, the discipline for "working out my own salvation with fear and trembling." And to give emphasis to all this, there is the near aspect of Death confronting me. Under the weight of this self-centering interest, real, immediate, and urgent, I confess I am tempted to say, What are to me, in comparison, Africans, Hindoos, Chinese, Mahomedans; they are in the hands of God all-powerful and beneficent; and are they to be so far transferred to me that I am to take it on my conscience, that he is, at this very time, holding me responsible for his own final award to any of them?

It may well be believed that something like this is the case with many thoughtful men; and *most* the case with the *most* thoughtful, most reflective.—The man may have to add (in very many cases there is *certainly* this addition), the cares, the often painfully absorbing cares of a family; and the laborious, anxious occupation, and frequent vexations and hazards of a secular business, which compulsorily demands the far greater part of the man's time and thought; especially and eminently so in the present state of the world and of this country.

I put the case rather strongly, but honestly; and I really do not see how that effusion of the whole soul, in a passion for operating on the pagan world, can be compatible with the actual condition, and the most immediate

and imperative duties and necessities, of the far greater number, indeed, of the main body of religious persons. I even fear that a certain portion (I should be sorry to know how much) of the lively excitement recently and at present in action, may be at the cost of some diversion from a deliberate, constant attention to those most immediate and grave interests; and it is easy to apprehend how the effect of the dazzle of such a large and ambitious object, presenting itself in the character of a zealous Christianity, may for a while put out of sight the serious business which requires to be transacted within; and preclude or suspend the sense of its necessity.

When the demand made on a good man by so many cares of his own, allows him to look abroad, the thing that first and immediately meets his sight is the nearly pagan condition of a multitude of human creatures close around him; and the most wretched state of education. Will it not be, and should it not be, some time before he can quite freely send off his thoughts to regions at the distance of a thousand leagues; for which flight the missionary orator is earnest to give them wings?

. . . I do not forget that home-operations, in promotion of education and religion, have been greatly augmented during the period in which the missionary spirit has come into such extensive activity. And it may be assumed to have been, for the greater part, the same principle that has been at work in the near and the far-off departments. In the latter, however, there has been much more of a *factitious* interest, from the effect on imagination of what is novel, foreign, strange, picturesque, and adventurous; from the sympathetic ignition of large assemblies; sometimes from ostentatious rivalry. It is like the descent from high poetry to very humble prose, to come back from many-colored tribes, from perfumed groves, from grand remains of fallen empires, from islands representing Paradise, and even from the grotesque enormities of idolatry,—to look on the state of your own parish. I am, however, unwilling to believe there are many instances like the one I may mention. A few days since I was in the company of a very respectable dissenting minister, an old acquaintance, stationed till lately in a rather prosperous rural village. He said the missionary cause is in great favor with the congregation, drawing from them and the vicinity about sixty pounds a-year; but that there is hardly anything worth the name of a *school* in the place, except the little that can be done on a Sunday to be forgotten in the week. Again and again, he had made strong representations to them on the subject, but in vain: and consequently the children have been growing up in gross and vulgar ignorance. There is more *éclat* in contributing to promote education in the West or the East Indies, than among the rustics in the vicinity.\*—There is one other topic on which

\* Here are three objects specified as being, not only distinct from the missionary enterprise, but even endangered by it. The first is "the self-centering interest" of a man's own salvation. As far as I remember, I have uniformly represented all *relative* benevolence as having its only scriptural

I should be tempted into an emphatic language, if I had not a difficulty to express exactly, discreetly, perhaps intelligibly, what I wish to convey. I allude to the light in which the Almighty is presented in much

foundation laid in *personal* piety; and have repeatedly cautioned the reader against the danger of regarding the former as a substitute for the latter. But is there no danger on the other side? Do not Mr. Foster's remarks appear to imply that the relative and other personal claims of piety are antagonistic; that the one class is defrauded of just so much as is given to the other? Whereas the love of God and of our fellow-man are both based ultimately on the same principle. A practical regard for the well-being of man is made, in Scripture, not only a *sign* of piety, but is one of the appointed *means* for increasing it. So that while it is quite true that "the most thoughtful" will take the most comprehensive views of the claims of their own salvation, it is true also, that if their thoughtfulness be Scriptural, they will take the most enlarged views of the claims of their fellow-men. They will not look for the most eminent piety in men who have thought themselves into a cavern or a cell, but among those whose piety is alike devotional and active, personal and relative. This is only in harmony with that general principle of the Divine government, that "he who watereth others shall himself also be watered."

Another of the supposed claimants is, "the painfully absorbing cares of a family;" and this especially owing to "the present state of the world and of this country." I doubt not that many a good man sighs to do more than he is doing for the diffusion of the gospel, but is incapacitated by his social condition as much as if he were a fettered captive. The bare statement of this fact, however, settles nothing. It names only the proximate cause of his incapacity. All the preceding causes are left in darkness. His best friends may have doubted his wisdom, apart from all religious considerations, in entailing on himself the cares in question. Or, if it be said that the causes are of a general nature, and arise from "the state of this country," this, it seems to me, only brings us back to the subject of the preceding note. For what is there so disabling for beneficence in the character of the times, if it be not the perpetual conflict which it has come to be the custom to maintain between income and expenditure? To augment the income there must be untiring vigilance, hazardous speculations, and competition in all its forms. And as such conduct in one party naturally tends to create similar habits in another, the painfully absorbing cares which at first served to increase profits, become indispensable at length in order barely to retain them, or even to stave off absolute ruin. That the evil is difficult of cure, I admit; every chronic disease of society is so. I speak only of its nature and origin; and may respectfully remind the Christian that if the evil be of the kind described, the remedy is (it may be indeed only to a very limited extent) in his own hands, and that he is held responsible for employing it.

I will briefly advert to the third object noticed by Mr. Foster, the nearly pagan condition of "multitudes close around us." The *order* which our beneficence should observe in arranging its objects, is, I think, prescribed in a general manner, in the word of God. Nor can that order—proceeding from ourselves outwards—be violated with impunity. Not only would it be an inversion of nature to *begin* with "the ends of the earth;" a wise man would begin with "those of his own flesh," if only for the sake of creating the means for more effectually benefiting ultimately those distant regions. But, then, the prescribed order of our procedure leaves another question still open;—how much of our attention is due to a near object before we extend our regards to one remoter? In other words, the doctrine of order introduces the doctrine of *proportion*. For it is as clear that remote objects have a claim on our regard *as soon* as a certain propor-

of what is spoken and written in the missionary service. I confess I have been confounded at what I have heard or read. For it seems to me to represent the Maker and Sovereign of the world as acting on a plan of exceedingly limited interference in the moral condition and destiny of the human race,—almost as acting in a subordinate or secondary capacity to the human instruments he employs, or *unsuccessfully* calls upon to be employed.

The idea forcibly suggested is, that, calmly keeping his power in abeyance, he devolves on a certain portion of men a real practical responsibility for the salvation or perdition of undefined multitudes of their race; making his own will on that awful alternative, conditional on the choice, and conduct of these responsible persons. Certain things conferred on the fallen race would be an infinite blessing; they *may* be conferred, for He is willing; but whether they *shall* be conferred, depends on another will—the will of that same section of the race to do their duty to the rest. As if he should be supposed to say, “If you will zealously labor for their salvation, I will save them, otherwise not. They may be saved if you choose; it is more your concern than mine.” A tribe or nation of eastern pagans has perished, through successive generations; there has been in the church in this western world a moral power, and therefore duty, to secure, in some important measure, the contrary event; the decision was placed in the hands of the depositaries of that power; but they were destitute of Christian philanthropy, and they decided fatally for the poor pagans whose destiny was depending on them. Thus the final state of a portion, perhaps a large portion, of the human race, has

tion of labor has been bestowed on the nearer, as it is that such labor was not due to them *earlier*. Now if in timing and in apportioning the regard given respectively to home and to foreign claims, some slight errors of apparent partiality are chargeable on Christian activity, it can hardly be a subject for wonder. If such errors can be pointed out indeed, and if they are not then corrected, the parties concerned will lay themselves open to rebuke. But let it be remembered that when the missionary enterprise began, the churches were doing comparatively nothing for either class of objects. It was a great thing to awake them. It can scarcely be a matter of just complaint that they did not awake to perfect wisdom at once. Churches and societies, like individuals, can acquire this qualification only by experience. Besides, it will be admitted that, speaking generally, the men who have done the most for foreign objects, have been among the most attentive to the claims of home. And, as it has been already remarked, that the personal and the relative claims of piety are not antagonistic, the same may be affirmed of missionary and of home claims. The diffusion of the gospel is not only a sign of the piety of a church, by reaction it becomes the means of increasing that piety.

Mr. Foster's anecdote illustrates a fact of occasional occurrence. A similar instance has lately come under my own observation. But as a set off, instances might be named in which the salary of the minister had been increased, and the education of the young had received an impulse, in consequence of the new life infused by the cause of Christian missions. I will only add, that Mr. Foster's own inimitable missionary sermon will be found to contain sentiments admirably corrective of those now remarked on in his letter.

J. H.

been, *immediately*, less at the disposal of the sovereign Maker, than of a certain order of human beings, who might have effected their salvation if they would. Multitudes of pagans are perishing at this hour, actually because Christians in England are parsimonious of their exertions and their money. The sovereign Being is looking on, and leaving their future state dependent on this penurious and precarious resource. In one of the speeches not long since delivered in Bristol, the speaker supposed himself to be addressing some one (any one) individual; and said;—"By refusing at this time the contribution which you can afford, you may be consigning one soul, that otherwise might be saved, to endless perdition." A not unusual figure has been that of a miserable crowd approaching the verge of a dreadful gulf. And the exclamation is, Oh, will you not eagerly and instantly hasten to throw yourselves between? What mortal cruelty to linger! The catastrophe is infallible if you do not rush to the rescue; for higher power declines to interpose. Lords of their destiny! look at the dread alternative you are deciding. At hearing such things who can keep out, or force out, of his mind the idea of a Deity resembling the gods of Epicurus?

Sometimes indeed, instead of what looks so like an attribution of indifference, a more gracious and sympathetic character is ascribed to the supreme power. He is earnestly intent on human salvation. "The heart of God" is deeply moved, he longs, he yearns for, he almost passionately desires, the conversion of heathens, of all mankind; he is, as it were, impatient to see his servants in zealous action; he pleads to them every motive that ought to arouse and actuate them; he reproaches their indolence; sets before them the mighty things which *cannot* be done till they shall go vigorously into the work; his operation being subjected to unwilling delay in waiting for theirs. And this is the almighty Being whose single volition could transform the whole race in a moment!

Now, my dear Sir, whatever be the *right* way of setting forth the subject, I do think that which I have attempted to describe borders very nearly (doubtless unconsciously and unthinkingly) on impiety. I need not be reminded that in the Scriptures there are many expressions, used in condescending accommodation, which might be cited as analogous to the strain of language against which I am protesting. Let those strongly figurative expressions stand out as illustrative of that condescension, manifesting itself in such forms as men might not have presumed to utter. Let them be cited as what God has condescended to say. But to construct of similar figures our current language, which ought to be that of plain truth and fact, will be to establish a fallacious order of ideas, to which literal truth will come to be the exception.

. . . . A glance back at what I have thus been writing makes me fear, that you will set me down as one of the coldest friends, to say the least, of the missionary cause. Not so. I am gratified in viewing the wide and widening extent of its operations—the comprehensive state-

ment of which forms a highly valuable section of your work ; and must have surprised many of its readers. And in every well-judged attempt I feel the complacency of a confidence *that some good will be done*. It should need no sentiment even of *piety* to admire the self-devotement of so many Christian adventurers and laborers : it might seem to have a commanding appeal to that warm dilating sympathy which all the world gives to the *heroic character* when displayed, as you observe, with animadversion that cannot be too pointed, in any department of enterprise but the cause of Christ. But unfortunately for me, from a temperament somewhat sanguine and ardent in youth, I am dried and cooled down to that of old age. The course of the world's events since that "season of prime," has been a grievous disappointment. No one who is not toward twice your age can have any adequate conception of the commotion there was in susceptible and inflammable spirits. The proclamation went forth, "Overturn, overturn, overturn," and there seemed to be a responsive earthquake in the nations. The vain, short-sighted seers of us had all our enthusiasm ready to receive the magnificent changes ;—the downfall of *all* old and corrupt institutions, the explosion of prejudices ; the demolition of the strongholds of ignorance, superstition, and spiritual with all other despotism ; man on the point of being set free for a noble career of knowledge, liberty, philanthropy, virtue—and all that, and all that. A most shallow judgment ; a pitiable ignorance of the nature of man was betrayed in these elated presumptions. But they so possessed themselves of the mind as to prepare it to feel a bitterness of disappointment as time went on, through so many lustrums, and accomplished so niggardly a portion of all the dream.

And now, at the end of half a century, how much has been effected in the moral and religious state of the human race, comprehensively considered ? To what amount are they wiser, better, and happier ? True, in certain particulars, and estimated according to a limited scale, it may be said and admitted that much has been done ; and we are very apt to fix on some favored section in the general view, and falsify its magnitude. But if our account be formed on a scale commensurate with the whole field of the active world, there would seem to be a mournful disproportion between the collective result, and the prodigious amount of things bearing with combined, mingled, and what *should* have been, *alterative* agency, on the human condition—the agitations, collisions, changes ; the schemes, toils, sufferings ; the expenditures of thought, speech, property, health, and life. There is, at least, so obstinate an *appearance* of disproportion that, after being looked upon through a long course of years, it denies me the ability to yield a *full* sympathy to your all-engrossing urgency of incitement, and enthusiasm of confidence. I cannot help hearing a voice (may it be that of a false prophet) which says, you reckon too fast, in your calculation of the effects to be accomplished by the actors and means already in the employment, or immediately at the disposal, of the missionary service. And as to that

million-handed energy, which you so eloquently summon forth, as by sound of trumpet, in the form of what might be called a *general rising* of the Christian community, to devote their whole faculties and means, I must needs think, that religion, *real* religion, exists under too many causes of repression, far too many inevitable complications with *self-concerns*, domestic concerns, worldly concerns, party concerns, to allow the possibility of such a demonstration ;—besides that, as I have noted before, one principle insisted on as indispensable to it, would, if attempted to be carried out to the extent apparently demanded, ruinously derange the frame and consistence in which society has always existed ; that is, wants to be supplied, by means of the multiplicity and diversification of other wants, many of them artificial.

I hope, indeed may assume, that you are of a cheerful temperament ; but are you not sometimes invaded by the darkest visions and reflections while casting your view over the scene of human existence, from the beginning to this hour ? To me it appears a most mysteriously awful economy, overspread by a lurid and dreadful shade. I pray for the piety to maintain an humble submission of thought and feeling to the wise and righteous Disposer of all existence. But to see a nature created in purity, qualified for perfect and endless felicity, but ruined at the very origin, by a disaster devolving fatally on all the race—to see it in an early age of the world estranged from truth, from the love and fear of its Creator, from that, therefore, without which existence is a thing to be deplored—abandoned to all evil, till swept away by a deluge—the renovated race revolving into idolatry and iniquity, and spreading downward through ages in darkness, wickedness and misery—no Divine dispensation to enlighten and reclaim it, except for one small section, and that section itself a no less flagrant proof of the desperate corruption of the nature ;—the ultimate, grand remedial visitation, Christianity, laboring in a difficult progress and very limited extension, and soon perverted from its purpose into darkness and superstition, for a period of a thousand years—at the present hour known and even nominally acknowledged by very greatly the minority of the race, the mighty mass remaining prostrate under the infernal dominion of which countless generations of their ancestors have been the slaves and victims—a deplorable majority of the people in the Christian nations strangers to the vital power of Christianity, and a large proportion directly hostile to it ; and even the institutions pretended to be for its support and promotion, being baneful to its virtue—its progress in the work of conversion, in even the most favored part of the world, *distanced* by the progressive increase of the population, so that, even there (but to a fearful extent if we take the world at large) the disproportion of the faithful to the irreligious is continually increasing—the sum of all these melancholy facts being, that thousands of millions have passed, and thousands every day are passing, out of the world, in no state of fitness for a pure and happy



state elsewhere. Oh, it is a most confounding and appalling contemplation!

And it would be a transcendently direful one, if I believed the doctrine of the eternity of future misery. It amazes me to imagine how thoughtful and benevolent men, believing that doctrine, can endure the sight of the present world and the history of the past. To behold successive, innumerable crowds carried on in the mighty impulse of a depraved nature, which they are impotent to reverse, and to which it is not the will of God in his sovereignty to apply the only adequate power, the withholding of which consigns them inevitably to their doom—to see them passing through a short term of mortal existence (absurdly sometimes denominated a *probation*\*) under all the world's pernicious influences,

\* Mr. Foster has here advanced within the awful shadow of a subject which seems partially to have obscured his perception of the ultimate ground of moral responsibility. There is reason to believe that the divine standard of man's accountability is a scale of all but unlimited graduation. While, therefore, it would be absurd to suppose that "the men of Sodom and Gomorrah" will be judged by the same scale as the men of "Caper-naum," would it not be almost as absurd to infer that, on that account, they will be judged by no scale whatever? "They who have sinned without (a written) law, shall be judged without law." Destitute of a written law, they are still within the jurisdiction of natural law. Of this class let the most uncivilized tribe be selected; still its members will be found to be held answerable to, and by, each other. Of this tribe let the last wandering survivor be taken; and it will be found that he is still, in many respects, "a law unto himself." The elements of responsibility are within him. His moral constitution, not his external advantages, renders him amenable to law. He is a man, and therefore he will be judged. He is a man whose moral nature has been exposed to the most debasing and depraving influences, and therefore he will be judged accordingly.

It may not be irrelevant to add, first, that as, among such portions of the human race, the period of intellectual infancy lasts much longer than it does among more cultivated classes, there is high probability for concluding that the state of accountability is not reached till a comparatively advanced period of youth. Secondly, it may be worth consideration whether, while *we* shall be reckoned with as to *how much* we have advanced in holiness considering our advantages, there may not be many who will be reckoned with as to *how little* they have retrograded in evil considering their disadvantages. I would not for a moment be supposed to contravene the everlasting principle, that "without holiness no man shall see the Lord." But, believing that there is a class of cases in which a struggle is maintained against moral determination, which, though unsuccessful in the best sense, involves a greater amount of resistance to evil than is made by some who yet advance in excellence, it is to be supposed that such resistance will be taken into the account, however unavailing it may be in the highest respect. And, thirdly, is not the doctrine of future punishment rendered gratuitously startling, when viewed in relation to the classes described by Mr. Foster, by the too positive, equalizing, and objective views generally entertained respecting the *place* of punishment. In opposition to scripture, the too general impression is, that there will be the same punishment for all the lost. And this, indeed, would follow necessarily, if, as it is too commonly supposed, the punishment depends almost entirely on the place, and if there is one place for all. But this would be to confound all gradations of evil character; and so far to make a mockery of that future judg-

with the addition of the malign and deadly one of the great tempter and destroyer, to confirm and augment the inherent depravity, on their speedy passage to everlasting woe,—I repeat, I am, without pretending to any extraordinary depth of feeling, amazed to conceive what they contrive to do with their sensibility, and in what manner they maintain a firm assurance of the Divine goodness and justice. Yet I see numbers of these good men preserving, apparently without great effort, a tone of equanimity, sometimes excited to hilarity, while everywhere closely surrounded by creatures whom, as not being the subjects of divine grace, they deliberately regard as the destined victims of eternal fire; and must regard as if created on purpose, that by passing a few fleeting sinful moments here, they might be prepared for it.

I meet with a few intelligent and pious men who join in the disbelief; and suspect, that unavowedly, many others are repelled into strong doubt, at the least, by the infinite horror of the tenet.

Here again I am reminded how the missionary advocates make of all this just a charge against the church—the religious section, as having been in effect owing to *them*; as if they had a certain power and responsibility, and had it now, to reverse substantially this awful destiny. But the supreme Sovereign's scheme and economy for the race was formed in no dependence on what the more privileged section might attempt, or not attempt, for them; formed indeed in a perfect foresight of what would *not* be attempted. How plain is it, that the case has its reason and its mystery in something far deeper than any consideration of what they might have done, and neglected to do. How self-evident the proposition, that if the sovereign Arbiter had *INTENDED* the salvation of the race, it must have been accomplished.

I really know not what apology to devise for this long intrusion on you, if you will not accept it as an excuse to say, I had no intention or expectation it should be anything like half as long; and that I am sorry for not having the faculty or art of saying what I want to be at in a few words. I can, however, say, in words few and most explicit, that I deprecate causing you the trouble of making any kind of reply, however brief. I need not say that I am nobody for anything like *controversial discussion*. If your candor will just excuse this transient incursion across the path of your studies, it is all that is requested by, my dear sir, yours with high respect, cordial regard, and all good wishes,

J. FOSTER.

ment which is supposed to be designed to distinguish between them. I do not believe, indeed, that "the mind will be its own place" literally; that is, that there will be no objective. But I do believe that every man will "go to his own place," and that this place will be the exact counterpart of his moral character. So that while some will be "beaten with many stripes," we believe that for the minimum of guilt there will be a minimum of punishment.

J. H.

## CCXXXIII. TO MR. JOHN FOSTER.

*Bourton, October 1, 1842.*

DEAR NEPHEW,—. . . I am glad you have such advantages for attendance on the means of grace, and though some of you prefer one place and sect, and some another, I have no doubt you agree in the main thing, and preserve family peace.

. . . Three of you, it seems, are come into family cares and duties. I wish that wisdom and resolution may be given you to act worthily in that situation, and I wish that your families may rise up to be a blessing to you, and good and happy in themselves. You have great need to pray for the divine blessing on the parents and the children. I am sometimes willing to hope that the thousands of petitions offered to God by *my* pious parents, and *your* grandfather and mother, for the welfare of us, their descendants, may even thus long afterwards be of some avail with their God and ours. But our own prayers for ourselves and our children must continually ascend to him, pleading in the name and merits of our Lord and Saviour.

It often comes into my thoughts how much good of the highest kind would have been obtained, if I had been as constantly earnest as I ought to have been in that most profitable of all exercises. At the age of every one of us there is room to mend in this important matter; and I hope and pray that we may not neglect it.

. . . Give my kind respects to your mother, whom I congratulate on having been so highly favored in point of health, and in having such worthy children around her. To William also I would express all friendly good wishes for his welfare in all respects, and the same you will yourself accept from your old uncle, whom you have never seen, and who has never seen you, nor probably will in this world, and whose name is, like your own,

JOHN FOSTER.

## CCXXXIV. TO THE REV. THOMAS GRINFIELD, M.A.

*December 22, 1842.*

MY DEAR SIR,—Before submitting the few slight notices of your preface, let me be allowed to apologize for what I am afraid was a great rudeness in my matter of putting Mr. — “*out of court.*”

The case is, that I have no patience with the outcries raised by clergymen in, about, *against* their own church; their multiform dissensions; their mutual accusations and protestations; the insubordination and remonstrances of the inferiors against the consecrated authorities in high places, &c. One is provoked to say, Shame on you;—why do you not strive with the utmost care to hush up your subjects of disturbance, and maintain at least the *appearance* of a dignified union and conformity, according to the declared object of your institution, and under the sanc-

tion of its most venerable order? Have you not a grand standard of faith and discipline sacredly preserved, unaltered from generation to generation; appointed for the express purpose of maintaining inviolate the Christian doctrine and practical institutions, to which, in its most comprehensive application, you all solemnly engage your assent and fidelity? I must in mere decency believe it is not a Jesuitical juggle, but a carefully explicit formula of doctrines and prescriptions; and also I must in decency believe that you have signed your adhesion intelligently and honestly. Is it not most scandalous then, that you should be seen as a body, all in confusion; section in conflict with section; your rule of faith interpreted in every arbitrary mode, with mutual accusations of perverting it; and with loud complaints from some of you of twenty things wrong in either the constitution or the administration of the church? Pray try to come, if possible, to such an understanding among yourselves, that you may no longer stand before the nation in a condition which, taken in conjunction with your solemn pledge to conformity, must expose you to opprobrium. We dissenters having no standard of conformity, having no high prelatial authorities over us, may sectarianize and fight as much as we please; but for *you*, under the solemn obligations you have taken upon you, to exhibit yourselves in such lawless commotion—is not to be tolerated. You should either maintain the peace of the church, or come out of it; for as to *altering it to the mind of any one, or any sect of you*, that would be an idle dream.

It was under the habit of such kind of feelings, that I was indisposed to hear the remonstrant lamentation of good Mr. —. More than enough of this.

In the department of Christian morality, I think many of those who are distinguished as evangelical preachers greatly and culpably deficient. They rarely, if ever, take some one topic of moral duty as—honesty, veracity, impartiality, Christian temper, forgiveness of injuries, temperance (in any of its branches), the improvement of time, and investigate specifically its principle, rules, discriminations, adaptations. There is none of the *casuistry* found in many of the old divines. Such discussions would have cost far more labor of thought than dwelling and expatiating on the general evangelical doctrines; but would have been eminently useful; and it is very *necessary*, in order to set people's judgments and consciences to rights. It is partly in consequence of this neglect (very general, I believe) that many religious kind of people have unfixed and ill-fated apprehensions of moral discriminations. Hall told Anderson that in former years he had oftener insisted on subjects of this order.\* I know not whence the ill-judged alteration, during his resi-

\* “Be not afraid of devoting whole sermons to particular parts of moral conduct and religious duties. It is impossible to give right views of them, unless you dissect characters, and describe particular virtues and vices. ‘The fruits of the flesh’ and ‘the fruits of the Spirit’ must be distinctly pointed out.’ To preach against sin in general, without descending to par-

dence at Bristol ; to judge from so much as I heard. He could hardly have fallen in with the common notion ; " Lead them to the true evangelical principles of doctrine, and the morals will follow of themselves." I would answer, " If so, how superfluous is a large portion of the New Testament, as being specifically and often minutely *preceptive* !"

---

CCXXIV. TO THE REV. JOSIAH HILL.

*Stapleton, December 24, 1842.*

MY DEAR SIR,—I am glad to find you safely settled in your *temporary* domicile (you can understand the interest I have in so describing it). After passing once again over several score of leagues of this unhappy planet, I am wishing you may but once more make that same traverse ; so that in that once more you may say to the hills, the streams, the towns, the inns, the bridges, as you shall pass them, *adieu*. The thought has often come on me, on my occasional journeys, as one thing and another has passed my view, " I shall see that no more !" And this sentiment becomes more distinctly felt in the late decline of life, not only because the shortened residue of life renders it of course less likely that journeys will be repeated, but also because there is a peculiar pensiveness, an evening shade, over the general tone of feeling.

. . . . The town is become to me very nearly as if uninhabited ; and beside my walking faculty is strangely diminished within the year now so near an end ; and also the time of going after books, looking in at auctions, &c., is nearly gone by. From necessity it is so at present with you, and I hope will be so, when you shall find again much more opportunity for indulging the folly. A *folly*, I repeat with grievous emphasis, when I look round on this room, wondering how I could ever be so besotted as not to see the *impossibility* of *reading* the long accumulation ; and mine is a more bitter repentance than yours can be, for you have dealt on *saving* terms, while I have foolishly expended money which often was wanted for other uses, and in a quantity which would have been valuable for those uses. . . . .

Have you wholly given up the project and task of making some use of the *Diaries* of a pious man ? You may do so, and little more will be said. It is very curious to observe how the first eagerness for publishing something about a good man has quieted down after the project had been kept for some time in abeyance. There is something melancholy in this, as showing how the warm memory of the good can decline by degrees to a comparative indifference, even when there is not a real change in the judgment of their worthiness. In a little while after our departure, how very, very few will feel a painful sense of *wanting* us.

ticalars, may lead many to complain of the evil of their hearts, while, at the same time, they are awfully inattentive to the evil of their conduct"—*HALL's Charge to the Rev. J. K. Mall. Works, iv., 483.*

It will be confined to some three or four (if not still fewer) who had a cordial, deep attachment to us from relationship, or the most intimate kind of friendship. One has a feeling, that it would be gratifying to be so remembered by these few that, in their advance toward the end of life, they should be delighted with the thought and expectation of meeting us again elsewhere. You have such remembrances of the departed, remembrances cherished in the depth of the heart, thus placing you in an affectionate relation to a world unseen.

Our sense of deprivation in the loss of persons who were dear to us, is soothed by the thought, that there are so much fewer to feel anxious for in leaving them behind. In this matter I have the advantage (in this particular view I may rightly call it so) over many, in having only these two of my family to leave exposed to the ills of life in this wretched world; and *you* have the advantage over *me*. *One*, chiefly, will be the object of your last solitudes. I do not say, that I could wish myself in the same case; but I have often thought, that to see my children safely and happily out of the world would be a very strong consolation for their loss. But, we must not distrust that all-sufficient Providence in which we profess so firmly to believe.

The strangely wild and almost vernal temperature (a delightful sunshine while I am writing) seems to promise that the old year shall go off in smiles, and even in buds and flowers,—an alleviating circumstance to ill-clad, ill-housed poverty. In alleviation of this, one is now hoping that something will ere long be done by *man*. . . . Glad to see what a strong and wide excitement is produced by the operations of the "League," aided by calamitous experience. There seems to be an universally confident expectation of the abolition, at no distant time, of that detestable incubus on the nation's prosperity, the Corn law. . . . [The] *Premier* must make stout fight for it yet awhile, in order to stand well with his gang; at the same time that I believe there is no man in England more fully convinced that it is a nuisance which ought to be abated.

---

CCXXXVI. TO W. L. B. CATES, ESQ.

December 30, 1842.

DEAR SIR,—You will naturally, and indeed inevitably, have considered your not receiving any acknowledgment of your friendly letter, of a date so very far back, as a proof (I need not say of so plain a fact as a very defective *civility*, but) of great want of kind and benevolent feeling. This interpretation would be so reasonable, according to fair and usual rules of judging, that I am reduced to the hope that you may be *able* to believe me, when I assure you, it would entirely be a mistake.

If I were to attempt to explain how, then, such a thing could happen, I should have to confess to you such a power of the besetting sin of *procrastination*, as I hope your own experience cannot, and never will

enable you to conceive. It would be an exhibition amusing to the spectator, but mortifying enough to me, if it could be shown how many hundreds or thousands of things which I acknowledged proper to be done, was disposed to do, and intended to do, to-morrow, were not done in due time, or not done at all. Defer the thing *once*, defer it *now*, and there is no knowing when its time will come. If one imitated any other person's bad example, as submissively as one imitates one's own, what a contemptible servility it would seem.

It is gratifying to be held in cordial esteem by a person of intelligent and serious mind, even when personally unknown. At the same time I would wish to be something better than flattered, by the assurance of having been happy enough to render a material service to such a mind. A benefit conveyed through a silent channel, in a direction of which I could have no conjecture, to your mind from mine, making me, as it were, a sharer in a good with a person I have never seen, and may never see, I would account a favor conferred on me by a good Providence. Your name will be remembered as affording one pleasing assurance that I have not lived altogether in vain.

Presuming that you may not be advanced very far on in life, I hope you have yet a prolonged course before you for making the best and happiest use of life; and I trust that a numerous train of advantages will be afforded to you for accomplishing that great purpose.

With sincerest wishes and prayers that it may be so,

I am, dear sir, very truly yours,

J. FOSTER.

CCXXXVII. TO THE REV. JOSIAH HILL.

January 31, 1843.

MY DEAR SIR,—Considering what an infinite multiplicity of things is taking place in the surrounding world, one finds one's own insignificance in having so little for one's own part to recount. To live through the day, in ordinary habits, to sleep through the night, continuing and repeating this through the week, through the month, with very occasionally a call by an acquaintance, and a letter from a distance; and thus a short life is wearing away.

. . . . What a vast transition it is from one's own little share of good and ill to that of the national millions, whose interests are this week portentously coming in question, and under no hopeful auspices. The settled expectation seems to be that the hateful and demented party are to carry it all their own way, for at least one year more of aggravated national calamity. One can sometimes almost wonder that the righteous Sovereign does not strike such a combination in iniquity with some evident, signal mark of avenging justice. But this is not now, as of old, the order of his government. There is the sad consideration, besides, that the *suffering* part of the nation are, for the greatest part, in no con-

dition to appeal to Heaven, being no less strangers to the knowledge and fear of God than the class under whose iniquity they are suffering. The most melancholy consideration as to the suffering masses is, that their afflictions can have no tendency to do them good in respect to a higher interest, but powerfully the very contrary—tending to alienate their minds from any belief in Providence, and to generate a spirit of recklessness, contempt of law, and intense revenge. They are alienated from all observances of religion by their squalid condition, and their children are deprived of education. If they could be suddenly thrown loose, as in the French Revolution, with what a dreadful fury would they rush on the proud, splendid, sumptuous ranks that have been treading them to the earth. It will, after all, be strange if the cup of bitterness shall not yet come round to them even in this world. . . . One goes fully along with the animated spirit of the Anti-Corn-law League; confident that they are working a commotion, before which monopoly will be prostrated at no far-off time. It will be interesting to have the collective manifestation, in their grand meetings of this week, of the effects already produced, and the plans and means for prosecuting and extending the war. . . .

---

CCXXV. TO MRS. HOLBROOKE.

*Stapleton, near Bristol, March 30, 1843.*

MY DEAR OLD FRIEND,—For it is a long, long time to look back upon since the friendship was *young*,—I was exceedingly gratified at receiving your letter—dilatatory as I have been in acknowledging it, and as I am in everything I ought to do with despatch. It was a strange and pleasing surprise to see at the end of it the name of *Fanny Purser*. It gratified me that the said Fanny Purser should, through so wide an interval, have remembered me with so kind a feeling as should induce her to write to me. This feeling was excited by the mere sight of the *name*; and it became quite animated as I read the friendly sentiments expressed in the letter. I could not have flattered myself that I had been so well, so long, and so very kindly remembered.

What a distant retrospect, and how many remembrances and associations—your excellent parents,—Henry Strahan,—Mrs. Butler,—our talks and amusements,—the places and change of habitations,—your brother a boy,—yourself a girl, hardly fifteen perhaps, the last time I saw you. In the case of your brother, when I heard from him at an advanced period of life, I was wondering what manner of personal appearance he might have grown and passed into, in the course of so many years, while I could not bring him to my mind in any other image than that only one which I so well remembered; and even after seeing him at last, I remained in a kind of baffle between that perfectly preserved image, and his actual appearance as a more than middle-aged man. Of you, also, I can have only the one image in my mind; and I am thinking and won-



dering what would be the difference, if the present reality were to appear before me. In *him* I did descry some trace of the original aspect, under the vast difference. If I had a like opportunity I should be interested and curious in making such inspection and comparison in the case of his sister. It really does seem something strange to think of Fanny as a grandmother! What a succession of broad stages one has to imagine between! So many individual and social changes, so many deliberations, determinations, movements, occupations, duties, cares, pleasing and painful experiences. So many dispensations of Providence, so many occasions for relying on that Providence, so many times and subjects for serious reflection, so many, and some of them severe, lessons of instructive experience. It would be interesting to hear you tell the difference between your youthful anticipations of life, and your views of it as resulting from what you have experienced and witnessed in the progress through so long an interval. What is the difference in this respect between yourself and your daughter? Have you occasion sometimes to smile at the promises with which she hears the future flattering her? Have you to say to her—"My dear child, you will find it out in due time?" Is she incredulous, sometimes, to what you have to tell her from having had so many more reflections, and feelings, and trials? But perhaps she is not of a sanguine temperament, and I am very willing to believe that you are not of a gloomy one, notwithstanding the share that has been appointed you of mournful experience. I rejoice to see you in possession of the one grand resource against both the ills of life and the fear of death; and that you share this happiness with your daughter and her husband. In respect to this great interest you have the happiness to be as in communion with those who have gone before you, your estimable parents, and with the remaining estimable relation, your brother. The time is hastening on when that communion will be wholly translated to a happier world, and there exalted and perpetuated. I pray that I may not myself be wanting to it.

It is highly gratifying to think of your brother (the *boy* in my tenacious imagination), so worthy in character, so favored in his course of life, and so singularly happy in his family—I think beyond any other example that I have known; for, as you say, *all* his children seem to be such as he would desire. I hope *their* descendants will be such as to bring no unfavorable change into the history of the family.

I was expressing some small degree of wonder that, on the loss of him who had been the cause of your leaving Ireland, you had not been disposed to return; when he plainly indicated how you had stronger reasons to remain where you have found a little circle of friendly, social interests. Over every interest there must have spread a gloomy shade, for the present and some time past, in your town and neighborhood, from the fearful state of suffering and disturbance. . . .

I should greatly like to see you; I should, as in the case of your brother, fix and settle in my mind and imagination *who you are*; for I find

myself addressing an *equivocal somebody* between the good, pleasing little girl Fanny Purser, and a certain sedate, matronly personage, a grandmother of the age of fifty-seven. I hope many years are yet added to that account, *moderately* happy, and finally concluding in something incomparably happier than anything on earth.

I will repeat how very greatly I am gratified by your kind letter ; and shall be so again if at any time you shall feel disposed to favor me. I wish you had mentioned the remembered things that you say " would have made me smile." It would have been very curious to see whether my own very miserable memory had retained them. It does retain many particulars of these remote times, and some of them vividly.

My dear Fanny, as I like to call you, I commend you and yours to our heavenly Father ; and repeat to you how truly I am your cordial and much gratified friend,

J. FOSTER.

CCXXXIX. TO THE REV. JOSIAH HILL.

*Monday Evening, 1843.*

MY DEAR SIR,— . . . We are not suffered to go to sleep, like our forefathers, in the dull quiet of their times. We should be able to live on " agitation,"—for we are to have nothing else. The Corn-law agitation—Education agitation—Puseyism agitation—Scotch church agitation—and, most portentous of all, Irish agitation. One cannot yet believe that the government will persist in the education scheme, in defiance of a vaster number of petitions (the Speaker has said) than ever crowded in on any former occasion, and nearly all on one side. If the thing really is, after all, to be forced through, on the strength of a besotted and unprincipled majority, it will have the good effect of embodying and embattling the dissenters (in which they have been deficient) to a degree never yet approached. And it will no longer allow them to be *numerically* underrated as they have constantly and wilfully been hitherto by the church party. It is sadly to be feared that the Methodists will have forfeited the favor into which they have latterly been growing, and are very desirous to grow, with that party. . . . The anti-corn-law [league],—an admirable organ and system of agitation, which will doubtless be successful at no distant time. The Irish affair is formidable and alarming ; *can* it end otherwise than in some fearful catastrophe ? The object is surely wild and impracticable ; but the prodigious national excitement—resisted, defied, and still more inflamed, what form of action will or can it take to come to any definite issue ? It cannot be persuaded, legislated, or threatened, into quiet surrender. And if so, what is there for it but a wide, sanguinary, military execution, followed by all kinds of oppression, and an implacable, ever-burning hatred ? . . .

## CCXL. TO THE REV. JOSIAH HILL.

1843.

. . . . No doubt you have seen a petition, in pathetic terms, in behalf of the *Scotch Church*, adopted by the *élite* of the Sanhedrim. One would have given something much more considerable than the "smallest coin of the realm" to overhear the consultation. How comes the Scotch church to be anything to *them*? While not a hoof of them is admissible into *any* establishment, and while their sect hardly makes any way in Scotland, are they so besotted to the principle of ecclesiastical establishments that they can *nowhere* see without horror the signs of their decline, lest, before the time for effecting their *own* establishment, the whole thing should have gone out of the world?

One shall await with great curiosity the upshot of that Scotch business. I have much distrusted the heroics of it from the first. Just now they *seem* as if coming up to the mark. But last week there was here an intelligent Scotch Presbyterian, who greatly doubted whether more than the merest scantling of the pledged 500 would be the self-exiles out of the land of Canaan. The ministry, it seems, are willing to concede some inconsiderable point, on a question "*quoad sacra*" (which I cannot understand), and he thinks that, affecting to regard this as a great concession, they will contrive to find it both conscientious and *prudent* to stay where they are. He observed, what is self-evident enough, in what a most desolate condition very many of the poorer ministers and parishes must fall into, if practically persisting in the recusancy. At all events, however, he said, a great and irreparable damage will have been done to that establishment. The kirk must regard this shock of earthquake as a warning intimation of more to come, and an ultimate downfall. As a hastening of that catastrophe, I have been wishing, all along, that the mal-contents *might* persist and complete their rebellion.

The two sisterly churches ought to sympathize; for our own is going fast to an opprobrious plight. It will be some time before the dissenters will hear again of the grand boast that the purpose and the *effect* of the establishment is to preserve the integrity and *uniformity* of the faith among the people. There are the old standard formalist body—the evangelicals—the Puseyites,—the last, according to all reports, making a triumphant progress. It is really quite time for the Methodist magnates to get up *another* petition—a passionate entreaty that something may be done or tried to save the *English* church from ruin. But, as in the case of Baal's worshippers, nobody will stir. Bishops, with small exceptions, seem determined, or at least content, to doze in their mitres. The inferior dignitaries must nod acquiescence, such of them as are not themselves in the movement; and statesmen have something else to look after. The dissenters may look on, delighted at the disturbance and peril of what has been continually boasted as built on a rock.

Something is to be attempted for *education* ; but one can have no faith in its compass or efficacy. It will be a church business from top to bottom—if indeed it be done at all. The accounts (which seem to have suggested the scheme) of the condition of the laboring classes, are horrid enough, in all respects, physical, mental, and moral. In their present physical state there *can* be no education. Creatures starving, in dirty rags, and herded in loathsome huts, and cellars, are in no state for intellectual cultivation.

---

## CCXLI. TO JOSEPH COTTLE, ESQ.

June 22, 1843.

PAST the longest day ! The thought strikes once more into the mind, how *desperately* rapid the flight of time ! The *shortest* day hangs on my memory as if it were but a few weeks back. To a certainty, and at the very utmost reckoning, how few times more shall we pass either of these marked points of time. How soon after the entrance on Eternity will these little marks and measures of Time cease to be of any account—unless perhaps, and possibly, they be noted and numbered by us in reference to the succession of events in the world we shall have left, on supposition, not improbable, that information of those events will be brought to the inhabitants of the other world ;—or in reference to the predicted periods of the future events in the great progress of the divine government on earth, looking on to the conclusion. As prophecy has disclosed *something* of this great scheme for our information and instruction while we stay here, is it not probable that prophecy will exhibit those futurities with a stronger light to the happy and enlightened spirits in the higher regions ?

---

## CCXLII. TO THE REV. JOSIAH HILL.

August 31, 1843.

. . . . After this proposed excursion you will have to think of preparing once more to sit down for the *winter*—unwelcome name and thing ! I hope you have a thorough pleasant apartment for fire, candle, books and Catherine ; the last as indispensable (and *that is saying much*) as the first. But what would you do in the supposed quandary—you shall pass a whole rigorous week in winter without fire, or without Catherine ? I see you will neatly evade the question, by saying that, by the supposition, the infliction of the cold on yourself, would be its infliction on Catherine also, and that this would be a piece of unpardonable barbarity.

You never name anything you have been reading. Among your heaps you doubtless have *Wilberforce's* noted book ;—and I may presume you have read it some time or other, though I never did, but very partially, till within these few weeks. Superfluous to say it is a work of great value ; faithful to a high standard of the Christian doctrine and morals,

searching and courageous to expose a fearful prevalence of real and fatal irreligion under the Christian name and formalities. His fellow politicians must have been strangely astounded at the appearance of such a prodigy in their hemisphere. . . .

Here the weather for some days past has been of very inauspicious omen for the harvest. How disastrous if it should continue so, and inflict the completing aggravation to the miseries of the people. . . . While the people are in such misery, their legislators are gaily scattering over the country for their rural festivities, their field sports, their watering-places, their excursions to all parts of the Continent, totally reckless of the people and the national interests.

I see in the Morning Chronicle to-day that you have got Rebecca at your gates ; a commotion that seems to laugh all your wiseacres to scorn. I suppose it is quite evident, as I have seen stated, it arose as a reaction against a wicked management of 'squires, magistrates, &c., to lighten the tolls on the great roads where their equipages rolled along, and lay them, in monstrous disproportion, on the secondary and cross roads chiefly used by farmers and tradesmen. For these it was in vain to remonstrate, and appeal to magistracy, law, and so forth ; and therefore it was quite time for them to take law into their own hands. They commit much injustice in their turn ; still the probability is, that the result at last will be a much more equitable apportionment of the road-tax, and a mortifying conviction in the *higher folk* that they are really not to have everything their own way. . . .

CCXLIII. TO SIR JOHN EASTHOPE, BART., M.P.

*Stapleton, Thursday, October 3, 1843.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,— . . . Short as is the interval since I wrote, it has made a material change in my condition. I adverted to the plainly approaching termination of life, and perhaps named a year or two. But the indications have latterly become so express, that I now have not the smallest expectation of surviving a very few months. The great and pressing business is, therefore, to prepare for the event. That is, in truth, our great business always ; but it is peculiarly enforced in a situation like mine. It involves a review of past life ; and oh how much there is to render reflection painful and alarming. Such a review would consign me to utter despair, but for my firm belief in the all-sufficiency of the mediation of our Lord. . . .

My very dear friend, make the one thing needful the great practical object. Accept this simple wish ; I feel my mind quite incapable of seeking anything more interesting to say to you.

I rather hope you will be still prevented coming hither. I can hardly

say I should be glad to see you. I cannot maintain any length of talking, its effect is so mischievous on the cough, and in other ways.

I will not *yet* say, farewell.

J. FOSTER.

---

CCKLIV. TO SIR JOHN EASTHOPE, BART., M.P.

*Stapleton, October 5, 1843.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,—A note received from you through the hands of —, expresses a wish for an interview, on condition that it might not injuriously affect the extreme debility into which I am rapidly sunk.

I say *rapidly*; for it can be but few weeks since I spoke of a few months as likely to bring the conclusion. In a later letter I may have narrowed the interval. But *now* my report would be, that I cannot think it possible to survive many days.

In such a state of prostration, it is impossible for me to hold any communication for more than a very brief space of time. . . . The case being such, my dear friend, I do think it will be better to decline the interview, so acceptable as it would have been in other circumstances.

Before you will have returned from the Continent I shall have made a much greater and more mysterious journey.—After some years, I wish they may not be few, you will be called to follow me. And may God grant, through the infinite merits of Christ, that we may find ourselves in a far happier world.—Among my last good wishes will be those for the happiness, and the *picty* of all your family. . . .

And now, my dear friend, I commend you to the God of mercy, and very affectionately bid you

FAREWELL.

## CHAPTER X.

## MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS ON MR. FOSTER'S CHARACTER.

WITHOUT any attempt at a formal and critical delineation of Mr. Foster's character, it may render the materials for making such an estimate more complete, to present a few particulars relative to his private habits and tastes, which could not be conveniently interwoven with the preceding narrative.

His intense sympathy with nature appears to have been first awakened by the grand and awful,\* but as his faculties matured the love and admiration of the beautiful became not less vivid. He took great delight in all flowers, but especially in the more delicate, retiring, and minute. In the spring he anxiously watched for the appearance of the first snow-drop, crocus, primrose, or buttercup; this last, indeed, he regarded with a feeling more of sadness than of pleasure, from its betokening the far advance of the season. Sometimes, on returning from a walk he would say in a tone of concern, "I've seen a fearful sight to-day; —I've seen a buttercup!" He scarcely ever gathered any flowers, disliking to occasion their premature decay.

He felt a delight, amounting almost to fascination, in colors of all kinds, whether delicate tints, dazzling showy colors, or deep sombre hues.

He had great susceptibility to the "skyey influences," and often remarked how much less any given space of time was worth in dreary, inclement weather. He used to say that it depressed all his faculties, independently of the low temperature.

He did not possess any scientific acquaintance with music, for which he had no ear; yet was passionately fond of some kinds of it, especially of the mournful and solemn. He used to wonder that it should be thought impossible for a person who, technically speaking, had no ear, to feel an interest in music, and strongly asserted the power it could exercise over himself to inspire almost

\* Vide vol. i., p. 3.

every description of sentiment. He was never tired of hearing anything that pleased him, but would ask for it again and again. He felt more interested in instrumental than in vocal music, and his favorite instrument was the organ.

In connection with his taste for graphical works,\* may be noticed the costly binding he bestowed upon them. His directions to the binder were given with a minute exactness which showed a familiarity with the process of the art, and great taste in the ornamental adjustments; this was only one mode of gratifying his perceptions of the beautiful, and arose in no degree from a fondness for display. Indeed he preferred that elegant works should be kept out of sight, till wanted for particular inspection. One day, noticing that several volumes had been placed on a table so as to show their exterior to the greatest advantage, he playfully said, "I'd put these books somewhere else; I've a proud modesty that disdains show."

His humanity to animals was great; and it might as justly be affirmed of him as of another venerable person, that "his sensibility produced a quick and powerful sympathy with the whole circle of animated Nature."† Of this the following is an instance. He once found a small bat in the garden whose wings had been injured sufficiently to prevent its flying, and yet not so much, but that he thought it might recover in a little time. He therefore brought it within doors, fitted up a box for it, and put it in his study that it might be out of the way of molestation, intending to keep it there till it should be able to fly again. However, he soon found that there was no chance of its recovery, and thought it more humane to destroy it.

He had a great dislike to fancy-work, as a sad misappropriation of time. Once when shown a piece of worsted work with a great deal of red in it, he said "it was red with the blood of murdered time." In household furniture, though from motives of economy he would have studied the utmost plainness, yet he also thought that taste was wasted when carried to any great extent on such things.

He was remarkable for civility and kindness to small tradesmen and work-people; he used to complain that women were generally underpaid, and would often give them more than they asked. He abhorred driving a bargain with poor persons. When

\* Vide Letters cviii., clxii., cxevi., ccxxix., in this volume.

† HALL's Funeral Sermon for DR. RYLAND. *Works*, 395.



sometimes shown small wares brought to the door for sale, on being told the price, he would say, "Oh, give them a few pence more;—see—there's a great deal of work here; it must have taken some time to make." And he would turn the article, whatever it might be, in every direction, and find out all the little ingenuities or ornaments about it. With regard to persons serving in shops he was very considerate, and would insist on the impropriety of occasioning needless trouble to them in showing their goods, or in sending small purchases to a distance. He has been known to go back to a shop, and pay something more for what he thought had been sold to him too cheaply. "It isn't often we meet with persons that do that, Sir," was the remark of a young woman on his turning back, and paying a shilling more for a lithograph which he had just bought.

He always spoke with great charity of the minor offences—particularly petty thefts committed by persons decent and honest in the main, when under the hard pressure of poverty. If anything of the sort were mentioned to him in a tone of condemnation, he would generally say, "one has great compassion for persons in such a miserable condition,"—"one deeply deplores that decent people should be driven to such straits,"—or something to that effect.

If he had been told of persons in peculiar distress, though he had scarcely any personal acquaintance with them, or even knew them only by name, he seemed constantly to keep them in remembrance, would often inquire after them, and make evident allusions to them in his family prayers. His delicate regard to the feelings of others was most exemplary, in rendering acts of kindness and benevolence, especially of a pecuniary kind. He endeavored in some ingenious manner to make it appear that he was the favored person, so sedulous was he not to excite a painful sense of obligation. From an over-anxiety on this point he sought to prevent, if possible, the expressions of gratitude from reaching him. During his residence at Frome, in visiting the poor members of his congregation, he commonly took a small parcel of tea with him, requesting them to make him a good cup; and on leaving, would adroitly slide half-a-crown under his saucer. On one occasion when he had transmitted, quite spontaneously and unexpectedly, a handsome donation to a person in a respectable station, but with limited means, he added a "most peremptory injunction that he might never be *mortified*, by one syllable or hint, in any way or time, of acknowledgment for so mere a trifle."

He was extremely quick in appreciating every little proof of recollection and regard which was shown him by his friends. Small presents, snuff-boxes and the like, he used to set a great value on. He generally had two or three in use at the same time, and now and then would put one back in the drawer where they were kept, and bring out another, so that all might come into use. All kind letters and messages seemed to have a more than ordinary value in his estimation.

On being first introduced to him, a stranger would be struck with the unostentatious and perfectly simple address—the familiar idiomatic phrases—the deep and almost muffled tone of voice, and the occasional searching glance cast over the spectacles from eyes “charged with thought”—the whole manner and posture indicating habitual meditateness. In large mixed companies he was not very ready to converse. It was mostly in the presence of two or three friends that the energy, originality and varied opulence of his mind, were disclosed. Those who listened to him, obtained not the mere knowledge of facts or arguments, but were trained to view men and things in their higher and more spiritual relations. On topics which lie within the province of the understanding rather than of sentiment or feeling, nothing crude or vague satisfied his mind; and thus, while intent on obtaining clear views himself, he unconsciously disciplined those who conversed with him to aim at a similar precision of thought.

Though he was not remarkable for a mere verbal memory, he had at command an ample assemblage of facts supplied by his extensive reading. On one occasion he had been silent in a circle where there had been a long and unsatisfactory debate on mummies. At length he came out with a few quiet interrogations, and the disputants soon found they had been exposing their shallowness to one who, as a person present remarked, seemed as if he had made this topic the study of his life; in fact his information respecting it was very extensive, and it would be hardly possible to express too strongly the degree of interest which he took in this class of antiquities. “*Ancient Egypt*,” he remarks in one of his reviews, “surpasses every tract of the world (we know not that Palestine is an exception) in the power of fascinating a contemplative spirit.” This was eminently the case with himself.

At another time a missionary from the South Sea Islands called upon him, who had been previously complaining of the scanty

acquaintance with the history and geography of those regions, evinced by some who were esteemed highly literary men and accomplished scholars. But in Mr. Foster's company he had such questions put and information given, that he came away with a humiliating impression of his own comparative ignorance.

Mr. Foster seldom, if ever, indulged in verbal wit. He once called the world "an untamed and untamable animal;" and on being reminded that he was a part of it, and therefore had an interest in its welfare, rejoined, "Yes, sir, a hair upon the tail." On insincerity, affectation, and cant, he was unsparingly sarcastic. Some years ago, the Emperor Alexander's piety was a favorite theme at public meetings. A person who received the statements on this point with (as Foster thought) a far too easy faith, remarked to him, that really the Emperor must be a very good man! "Yes, sir," he replied gravely, but with a significant glance, "a *very* good man—very devout; no doubt he said grace before he swallowed Poland!"

"His inclination ever led him," it has been remarked by an able observer, "to what was real and tangible in thought, to the rejection of all discussions which had no more than a merely logical and metaphysical interest to recommend them. He could not dispense with having distinct sensuous conceptions, and with this predominant bias it would have been strange indeed, if he had taken up with ardor the study of the scholastic authors, or the merely ratiocinative class of metaphysicians. Yet this did not infer an exclusive devotion to the practical; on the contrary, he loved to expatiate in speculations, respecting, for example, the future state, where the understanding can find no secure footing, and where the practical interest is certainly very small. But he must have before his mind what was real either in actual fact, or in imagination; the mere beings of the reason (*entia rationalia*) he could not fail to regard with an indifference, which, in the eyes of Plato, would have cut him off from all title to the name of philosopher. In this respect there seems to be a singular contrast between Mr. Foster and the sublime genius of Athens. And yet, so eager was Mr. Foster in speculating upon the prospect of man beyond the grave, that, very possibly, if he had not possessed the unspeakable blessing of a divine revelation, he likewise would have applied, as Plato felt himself impelled to do, the levers and screws, and all other conceivable machines of dialectic reasoning, if peradventure he might thereby succeed in wrenching from Na-

ture a secret, which she had locked up so securely, but which he felt to be of such paramount interest. . . . Perhaps he may be described as the Platonic Socrates without his truly Hellenic faculty and passion for mere logical disquisition."

Allied to this tendency to indulge in musings and questionings on the state after death, was Mr. Foster's disposition to listen to accounts of supernatural appearances; in which his belief was very decided. Not that he received them without a cautious and minute examination of the evidence in their favor; but there was manifestly an earnest longing, not unmixed with hope, that a ray of light might, from this quarter, gleam across the "shaded frontier." The belief in the heightened and conscious existence of the soul in an intermediate state, he held with great firmness, and would have thought it an unfavorable indication in any one to maintain the contrary opinion.

In reference to his general habits in social and domestic life, it has been most justly said, "There it is that moral worth is seen; and there it shone forth in this tender beloved parent; this kind-hearted master; this disinterested adviser; this cordial friend; this generous benefactor; this man of warm heart and kindly feelings, whatever his exterior may have indicated; of condescension to his inferiors; of simple honesty in his purposes; and of straightforwardness in his movements; this great man, with many peculiarities, but no littlenesses, who beheld all the airs of assumed greatness with utter scorn; this man of genuine refinement of mind, his whole conduct manifesting a delicate regard for the feelings of others, and that spirit of accommodation which made him willingly sacrifice, and even resolutely abstain from, comforts which he could not enjoy without occasioning some trouble to those who surrounded him, especially if they were beneath him in station—carrying this sensitive, scrupulous regard for others, and disregard of himself, to an extent which was painful to those who loved him.

" . . . His disposition was unresentful. He felt warmly, and even indignantly, when taking the part which he deemed incumbent upon him in a righteous cause—in defending the injured; in resisting what he deemed unjust, and exposing what to his eye was dishonorable;—but he thus felt and acted for others. In what had relation simply to himself, he felt it beneath him to cherish an unforgiving, revengeful temper. He excited strong attachment, but he encountered little personal enmity, for it was

not his habit to indulge it himself. At the same time, he was ready to act as a mediator, and was glad to heal differences—taking, sometimes, an active part in this exercise of Christian charity. Those who were young felt his condescending attentions. At the annual examinations in the Baptist College, his candor was always discernible, not less than the deep interest and fixed attention manifest in his manner. His sincere regard for the welfare of the young men, and his sympathy towards them, have left a lasting impression on the minds of many.

“ . . . There was an appearance of misanthropy in the tone in which he would sometimes speak of men in general, and of the state of the world. But it was an appearance only. He saw the debasement of human nature, and deeply deplored it ; and if his views of mankind were gloomy—formed as they were under the guidance of divine truth, and with the discernment of a keen observer—yet they were those of a compassionate spirit. . . .

“ Such was he to his fellow-men. Before God, he deeply abased himself. He saw ‘ Him who is invisible ;’ and in such a mind as his, the contrast of infinite grandeur and excellence with mere nothingness and pollution, would present itself in a vivid light to his intellectual vision. But with him, this humbling view of himself became a deeply penetrating emotion ; and it seemed to him not less preposterous than impious to assume any other posture than that of deep abasement before Him, “ whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain ;’ and, ‘ in whose sight the heavens are not clean.’ ”\*

Those who enjoyed frequent opportunities of intercourse with Mr. Foster could not avoid being impressed by the extraordinary *unworldliness* which pervaded his character, and imparted to it an indescribable dignity ; nor can the readers of these volumes have failed to notice how early he habituated himself to those views of human life which formed and cherished this noble peculiarity. The direct influence of Christianity in producing such a state of mind is so forcibly described in a passage of his *Essays*, that its quotation may be allowed as a suitable conclusion to the present biography.

“ It is a prominent characteristic of the Christian revelation that having declared this life to be but the introduction to another, it systematically

\* *On seeing Him who is Invisible ;* a Sermon occasioned by the death of the Rev. John Foster, preached at Broadmead, Bristol, Oct. 22, 1843, by Thos. S. Crisp, pp. 27–31.

preserves the recollection of this great truth through every representation of every subject ; so that the reader is not allowed to contemplate any of the interests of life in a view which detaches them from the grand object and conditions of life itself. An apostle could not address his friends on the most common concerns for the length of a page, without the final references. He is like a person whose eye, while he is conversing with you about an object, or a succession of objects immediately near, should glance every moment toward some great spectacle appearing on the distant horizon. He seems to talk to his friends in somewhat of that manner of expression with which you can imagine that Elijah spoke, if he remarked to his companion any circumstance in the journey from Bethel to Jericho, and from Jericho to the Jordan ; a manner betraying the sublime anticipation which was pressing on his thoughts. *The correct consequence of conversing with our Lord and his apostles would be, that the thought of IMMORTALITY should become almost as habitually present and familiarized to the mind as the countenance of a domestic friend ; that it should be the grand test of the value of all pursuits, friendships, and speculations ; and that it should mingle a certain nobleness with everything which it permitted to occupy our time.*"\*

\* On the Aversion of Men of Taste to Evangelical Religion. Letter viii.



NOTICES OF MR. FOSTER,  
AS A  
PREACHER AND A COMPANION:  
IN  
A LETTER  
TO THE  
EDITOR OF HIS LIFE AND CORRESPONDENCE.

---

BY JOHN SHEPPARD, ESQ.,  
*Author of "Thoughts on Private Devotion," &c., &c.*





## NOTICES, ETC.

MY DEAR SIR,—In attempting compliance with a request from the family of our departed instructor and friend, I choose the form of a letter to you: both as giving occasion for the cordial expression of my esteem, and best suited to the mere sketches or glimpses which I have to offer; since any strictness in style or unity of method would be scarcely in accordance with materials so very slight and incomplete.

A glance at two or three pages in the manuscript of those detached thoughts which form an unexpected addition to the literary relics of our lamented friend, and previous acquaintance with a few only of the letters probably to appear in your collection, have shown me that the revered writer is in them his own best biographer. Such indeed—where Christian sincerity of character exists—must be the case always, as to real development of mind and feelings: the more so likewise, in proportion as the traits of these have been deep, refined, and, in a great measure, latent.

I am conscious, therefore, that this attempt might very well be spared: for even if it be found to delineate some features of our friend's character not untruly, his own pen will have given us these, undesignedly, with touches far more correct and vivid.

This remark does not apply either to your consecutive detail of the facts of his life, or to the reflections which will be suggested to you by a careful examination of his manuscripts and correspondence. All that I can hope to present, in addition to these, is a scanty remainder of impressions made on myself, chiefly at a period very long gone by, from the intercourse, teachings, and ministrations, of a "highly esteemed" pastor. Even in these, however strong at the time, there must be a dimness which I regret, from the lapse of years, and a memory not retentive.

Yet I feel that since our friend's decease, the reperusal of

parts of his correspondence, converse with those who shared his society, and recurrence to his published writings, have all conducted, like the means sometimes employed for freshening and reviving old pictures, to bring out those clouded and fading impressions somewhat more clearly.

I look back forty years, and in seriously doing this perceive that our "tale" of those days, and of the long subsequent interval, however swiftly reviewed in mere outline, can never be really "told," except in the awfully revealing and judicial day light that draws near. It is (within a few months) exactly forty years ago,\* that I first saw our departed friend, arriving as a guest to my valued uncle, and at table with my still nearer relative, long since vanished also. That retrospect affectingly verifies and illustrates what I find noted by me from a discourse of his in 1805, on Ezekiel vii., 10,—“The time will arrive for each to say, Behold the day is come to sink from health and enjoyment into suffering; behold the morning is come which deprives me of that friend who was, as it were, the morning light to me.” Being then only eighteen years old, and, while fond of books, very little acquainted with lettered or highly intellectual society, I was of course much impressed and deeply interested, even after high expectations raised, by the acute sense, prompt imagination, extensive reading, and various talent of our visitor.

On the then recent resignation of their pastor, correspondence had been held between my nearest connexions and the late venerable Robert Hall; a letter from whom (Dec. 26, 1803) names “Mr. Foster, of Downend, near Bristol,” as “a young man of the most original and extraordinary genius, of unexceptionable character, of most amiable temper,” and suggests “that as he is probably at liberty, it may be thought fit to apply to him.”

Our much esteemed friend (my own kind counsellor through many subsequent years), the late Mr. William Tompkins, of Abingdon, who had known Mr. Foster at Downend, wrote, “His conduct has been, I believe, not only irreproachable, but every way consistent with his profession; his situation far from a lucrative one, but his mind of that cast that feels no uneasiness on this head, if his corporeal wants are barely supplied. Both places were well filled when I heard him, and it is said, notwithstanding the extreme sublimity of his ideas, the common people are very fond of him. This I account for from the great simplicity

\* From 1844, when this letter was *written*.

(not lowness) of his style. I cannot say whether he is likely to raise a congregation ; he seems to me a *unique* in all his exercises, social and public ; and it may be difficult to calculate upon the acceptance and usefulness of his labors or otherwise. Much must depend upon taste. He has the most fertile mind, accompanied, I am told, with a very benevolent heart."

These communications induced a request on the part of the church,\* that Mr. Hall would solicit Mr. Foster's ministerial aid at Frome. His reply, after ascertaining Mr. F.'s willingness to visit us (Feb., 1804), confirmed the preceding statements as follows :—" His manner is not very popular, but his conceptions are most extraordinary and original ; his disposition very amiable, his piety unquestionable, and his sentiments moderately orthodox —about the level of Watts and Doddridge, which, if I am not mistaken, are pretty congenial with those of the Frome society. He holds the mediation and atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ most strenuously, without which an angel from heaven would, in my opinion, do no good as a minister. I ardently wish Mr. Foster may be approved among you, and be the means of bringing many sons to glory."

Mr. Foster's visit took place in the same month, and his settlement as pastor shortly followed. During the first weeks of his stay he became my good father's guest, and a pleasing reference to our dwelling, in which he then sojourned, occurs in a letter of his to my dear mother.

Through those weeks, while the forthcoming essayist enlivened the social hours of our family, his retired hours were occupied by that work which soon after procured him so high and wide estimation. It was, however, as far as I remember, little, if at all, spoken of ; as, indeed, from those characteristics of the writer to which I shall ere long advert, it was very unlikely to be.

Our friend's conversation thus freely and advantageously enjoyed, together with his public ministry, opened, as it were, to my inexperience and curiosity, a new intellectual region. Yet the impression of his talents was less forcible than that combined with it of his " kindness " and " humbleness of mind." Nor did this arise primarily from his more general demeanor, which could as yet be little observed, but from a home instance suited both to affect and admonish me. My beloved mother, with no deficiency of good sense or taste, had a mind susceptible of quick

\* Worshipping in Sheppard's Barton Meeting-house, Frome,

and tender emotion, and often too much swayed by anxious fears. Being more provided with ideas than with courage or command of words fluently and aptly to express them, a sort of hesitancy and conscious imperfection very often appeared in her conversation. Perceiving, doubtless, the good influence, both spiritual and intellectual, which her guest might exercise on those most dear to herself, it was natural that he should receive a somewhat peculiar share of her hospitable attention. Yet it was not this, I am persuaded, which so much induced especial kindness on his part, as the observation of our dear parent's humble piety, sympathy, simplicity of heart. The way in which this powerful thinker and speaker evinced towards her his marked esteem, was by the utmost patience and courtesy, never treating her hesitation or confused manner with haste, but actually himself often giving completeness in his replies to what might be somewhat brokenly expressed; so that we were used to say in the domestic party, Mr. Foster not only listens kindly to our mother, but is at pains to perfect and illustrate her part in the dialogue.

I was at this time (as indeed ever after while the privilege was granted) an earnest hearer of our new pastor's public addresses. Indeed, it is right to state here, as I have to himself in correspondence, that so far as public discourses were made instrumental to implant in me a deep regard for Christian truth, it is to those of Foster I was most consciously indebted. It was not usual with me to attempt taking full notes of his discourses. They ever abounded in thoughts which *excite* thought, and the effort of continuous writing would have diminished, if not marred, the pleasure and profit of mentally revolving what was uttered.

Perhaps if the discriminating hearers of eminent speakers from the pulpit were to note down only those brief passages which they felt to be *most* impressive and useful (and this with the greatest possible exactness), a sort of memorabilia might be preserved, more valuable than some outlines, or even transcripts of the whole. I regret that my own notes and recollections from our friend's discourses do not possess sufficient accuracy to warrant me in presenting any of them as his.

The sermons of Foster were of a cast quite distinct from what is commonly called oratory, and, indeed, from what many seem to account the highest style of eloquence, namely, a flow of facile thoughts through the smooth channels of uniformly elevated polished diction, graced by the utmost appliances of voice and gesture.

But they possessed for me, and for not a few hearers, qualities and attractions much preferable to these. The basis of important thoughts was as much original or underived from other minds, as, perhaps, that of any reading man's reflections in our age of books could be; still more so the mode and aspect in which they were presented. That unambitious and homely sort of loftiness, which displayed neither phrase nor speaker, but things,—while the brief word and simple tone brought out the sublime conception “in its clearness;” that fund of varied associations and images by which he really illustrated, not painted or gilded his truths; the graphic master-strokes, the frequent hints of profound suggestion for after-meditation, the cogent though calm expostulations and appeals, the shrewd turns of half-latent irony against irreligion and folly, in which, without any descent from seriousness and even solemnity, the speaker moved a smile by his unconscious approaches to the edge of wit, yet effectually quelled it by the unbroken gravity of his tone and purpose,—all these characteristics had for me an attractive power and value, both by novelty and instructiveness, far above the qualities of an oratory or eloquence more fashioned on received rules and models. I should scarcely be ready to except in this comparison, as it regarded my personal admiration and improvement, even the rapid and fervent, yet finished elocution of Hall; though this as being more popular, while also more critically perfect, was I suppose more generally effective.

How highly it was estimated by our departed friend appears from his published “Observations on Mr. Hall's Character as a Preacher,”\* and how entirely he disclaimed competition with him in that department, may seem implied in his having declined to continue the week-day lectures, which he had been accustomed for a time to deliver at Broadmead meeting-house, after Mr. Hall succeeded to the pastoral office there.

That these lectures must have been admirably adapted to interest and edify a select auditory, will be very apparent to the readers of a part of the series, which has been published since his decease; and when the warm admirers of his writings have sometimes expressed censure as well as regret, that he did not give more of his thoughts to the press, I think it has not been sufficiently considered how much mental labor was involved in these and other of his preparations for the pulpit. Mr. Foster

\* In Robert Hall's Works; edited by Dr. Gregory. Vol. vi., pp. 143—145

could do nothing slightly, or without that strenuous application of thought by which, it is too probable, his bodily health was gradually enfeebled.

On the subject of his declining the Broadmead Lectures, I once heard him say, in his facetious mood, "Now Jupiter is come I can try it no more." No doubt the supremacy of Jupiter accorded best in his mind with the claims of Hall; and probably the different allotment of titles made at Lystra did not occur to him.

A comparison, which I confess may appear too far-fetched, has often presented itself to my mind, as picturing the differences between the respective style and manner of these remarkable preachers. On the noble modern road over the Alps, formed by the engineers of Napoleon, one gains here and there a view of that mountain track by which the passage had been made before. In moving quickly up the long traverses and sweeping curves of the new ascent, you trace on some opposite height the short angular zigzags of the path that preceded it. One might compare the eloquence of Hall to this great work; carrying you with ease to the loftiest elevations, winding with a graceful and simple, though elaborate course, amidst varied sublimities, gliding smoothly beside snowy summits where angels would seem to tread, and over gulfs where the voice of the wind or torrent might bring to mind the lamentings of the lost. On the other hand, the eloquence of our more recently departed friend has reminded me of that former mountain road, with its sudden turns of discovery and surprise; bringing us now to the brink of an awful perpendicular, then startling us by the quick descent to a goatherd's quaint dwelling in the glen; advancing along the giddy ledges of a cliff, and then, by a sharp turn, placing us close to some household scene in its recesses. Here, if there were less comprehensive or facile views of the sublime, one had nearer and more astounding glimpses of the inaccessible.

The path came more within the echo of avalanches; and while it oftener passed the chalet and the herd, it sometimes crossed the very inlet to dark untrodden chasms, "which no fowl knoweth." In that original and singular course, the guide, the mule, the litter, were forgotten; nothing was thought of but the grandeur of the mountains and the floods. If the one might be styled a road truly imperial, the other was a path worthy at once of the simplicity of Oberlin and the daring of Alpine barons. The imperial road

deserved and had the just admiration of the great and the many. I exceedingly admired it also ; but (peril and toil being in the ideal journey excluded) I would have preferred for myself, at least at times, the original path.

In this attempt to depict figuratively the style of Mr. Foster's preaching, my reference is not at all to his elaborately prepared sermons or lectures, but to those which had for me a still greater charm, in which he expatiated freely in every mode of thought and illustration, with little, if any, verbal pre-composition. None but those who have heard such unfettered and powerful excursions of his mind, can fully judge how far the figures may somewhat help to characterize them.

The mention of the imperial road has called to my recollection a saying of our friend, when once conversing with me about Coleridge and Hall. Some comparison being made, chiefly as to their conversational powers, he said, "Hall commands words like an emperor ; Coleridge like a magician." That saying would, I think, be still correct, with his own name in place of the latter. The magic of Coleridge, whose extraordinary powers our friend fully recognized, was probably indeed more splendid and imposing than his own. It was much the habit of that man of genius, if I may judge by the report of others, to invest himself with brilliant clouds ; passing sometimes the bounds of the intelligible for his hearers, if not for himself ; and even occasionally (as some university professor said of him) "discoursing most eloquent nonsense," which, amidst its obscurities, had a sort of magical prestige. If Foster could have so discoursed—which may be easily believed—it cannot be doubted that he *would* not ; deterred at once by a sense of Christian duty, and by a manly unaffected taste. His genius restrained itself from wandering beyond the daylight of clear sense, amid the shining mists of what his own phrase may designate, as "subtlety attenuated into inanity ;"\* and this I imagine no wise companion would regret. But, as it was, we had sometimes magic enough from his lips,—if that may be termed intellectual magic, which summons, as from all points of the compass, the most sudden and happy combinations and illuminations of thought. Images arose on all sides at the master's bidding, nor did he hesitate to call them from the loftiest region or the lowest.

Though I do not distinctly remember to have heard him express

\* *Essays*, p. 41. Edit. xvii.



that high admiration of the "Night Thoughts" which has been mentioned by my respected friend, Mr. Crisp,\* it has always struck me, that had Mr. Foster's early taste led him to metrical composition, he would have produced poetry resembling that of Young, at once in its high range of solemn devotion, its poignant satire, and its multiform gathering and assemblage of unexpected images. That was in a measure true of himself, which I heard him say when highly extolling the imaginative powers of Bishop Taylor, "Jeremy took his figures from all quarters, alike from paradise and the kennel." Yet this should be guarded by remarking, that in the most familiar figures and phrases of our friend, as an author and preacher, there was nothing coarse or unseemly; which I would that we could predicate of all gifted speakers from pulpit or platform.

It may be instructive to notice, how differently Mr. Foster's public discourses were estimated, by different persons of the unlettered class. We say not the poor, for it is a question of stores or resources not in the purse but in the mind; and even our age finds, and will leave, some more "unlearned" among the rich, than some of the many who subsist by daily toil. But those, even of the more illiterate, whose minds were awake, reflective or imaginative, though with little or no culture, often heard him with delight; while others who (like some of their superiors in station) could receive quite contentedly "the thousandth common-place," or would judge the current stamp of gifts and orthodoxy missing, where the style quitted the long-accustomed road of their former teachers, were found in some instances to dislike, and almost to despise, his ministry.

Two aged women, of a village where he preached gratuitously, are said to have given those contrasted judgments of his sermons; the one setting him down for "a perfect fool," the other "longing to hear that good man all the winter:" useful hints to be revolved by public teachers. They show how very diversely, in all classes of society, individual minds are constituted; and while they should no doubt impress the duty and importance of aiming at a true simplicity, they will also bring us (if it were only from the uncertainty and contrariety of effects produced) to the great ultimate consideration, that the Supreme Instructor can alone make any words of man essentially beneficial.

\* In his Sermon, occasioned by the death of the Rev. John Foster.

The chief requisite, however, for well understanding and rightly valuing our revered friend's usual discourses, was not learning but thoughtfulness:—some capacity and habit in the hearers of thinking for themselves. He rarely, if ever, brought in (how much less affected) "sesquipedalian" words, "dark sayings," or hard sentences," except by the necessity of the case. In writings for the press, he wholly discouraged "mock eloquence."\* Of this I can give an instance personal to myself, when, having submitted a short paper to his criticism, I found the word "harmless" set over my own "innocuous," by the friendly pencil. This preference of "the plainest words that could fully express the sense," was both advocated and generally adhered to in his own works. He was sometimes severe, at least so it struck me once as the corrected party, against any sort of hyperbole in grave public addresses; for in hearing me make in a discourse an imaginative supposition (which I have still sometimes thought was not very indefensible), he took occasion to offer a most friendly stricture, on what appeared to his critical and accurate judgment, its "excess."

But, indeed, if our friend eschewed both pomp and obscurity in published compositions,—where time and helps may be had by most readers to "do" all "into English" for themselves, if they think the task will repay them,—how much more in preaching, where the hearers are "extempore" by necessity, whatever the speaker be. Nay, I venture to think he would have agreed with me, that there is no assembly, not excepting even the highest in our land, in which the needless use of exotic words and abstruse thoughts would not, to a great part at least of their members, render any address less effective. If this be true universally, who will question the more especial fitness of Dr. Campbell's rule, as to preaching, "that whatever is advanced shall be within the reach of every class of hearers, in that which is of all audiences the most promiscuous?"† For all ordinary occasions, doubtless that rule is excellent: yet it must be construed as intending the *generality* of every class: since to bring down all public religious instruction to the reach of the weakest individuals, would be to wrong and defraud the large majority.

I would add what I think our experience will frequently verify,

\* See the forcible remarks on this in his essay "On the Aversion of Men of Taste," &c — *Essays*, Edit. xvii., p. 251.

† *Philosophy of Rhetoric*, p. 105

that, even for cultivated persons, words of home growth have often a forcibleness in bringing thoughts and feelings into contact with the mind, which no other words possess. Hence I conceive that languages whose compound words are wholly constructed from their home resources, must be much the more clear and impressive to "promiscuous audiences:" thus, Greek to the Greeks, and German to the Germans. Sir James Macintosh writes, "In all cases where we have preserved a whole family of words, the superior significancy of a Saxon over a Latin term is most remarkable. 'Well-being arises from well-doing,' is a Saxon phrase which may be thus rendered into the Latin part of the language, 'Felicity attends virtue:' but how inferior in force is the latter! In the Saxon phrase, the parts or roots of words being significant in our language, and familiar to our eyes and ears, throw their whole meaning into the compounds and derivations, while the Latin words of the same import, having their roots and elements in a foreign language, carry only a cold and conventional signification to an English ear."\* This well deserves practical attention. At the same time it is very evident, that a multitude of our words of foreign origin have no proper equivalents; and that if a writer or speaker of English should try habitually to exclude them, it would be an impracticable endeavor to unmake the language. In the utterance also of what has not been pre-composed in writing, it will occasionally happen, although the wish and aim be to introduce as few difficult words as possible, that such first present themselves to the speaker's mind, and must be at once employed; because the plainer substitute—except recollection were far more prompt than usual—is not ready at our immediate need. If this sometimes happened in the discourses of Foster,—or when, from their superior appositeness and nicety of adaptation, he was induced to choose uncommon words, or when the nature of his subject drew him into recondite thoughts,—he was at pains to throw light on each for the uninstructed class of hearers, by subjoining some easier circuit of phrase for the one, and opening some simpler access to the other. It should also be observed, that, if there were passages in his sermons where the literary style prevailed, these were intermixed with others of a different cast, and with modes of expression and appeal the most plain, pointed, and colloquial. In all this I am persuaded he deserved sedulous imitation by Christian teachers.

\* History of England, vol. i., p. 92.

The fault, in a critical point of view, of this eminent thinker's ordinary discourses (*if* that were a fault in his case which in general one must account so), was their being sometimes, at least in the earlier periods of his ministry, not *symmetrical*, not carefully proportioned in their several parts. This remark, however, should be very much restricted to those earlier periods ; or to his addresses on occasions and before audiences where he felt the greatest freedom. It does not apply to the lectures published since his decease ; which, inasmuch as they evidently (from the unfinished hints introduced for oral enlargement) were not prepared for the press, surprise me by their accurate composition both as to plan and style. But, on occasions such as are now referred to, his mind, prolific of thoughts, endued with unceasing copiousness of associations, imaginative, historic, moral, spiritual, with every subject and object, sometimes lingered on indirect or preliminary views, stealing from itself the time for full and intimate discussion of the chief and direct matter. Yet I doubt whether any unprejudiced hearer can have wished this habit or license restrained by the excursive speaker, while it continually opened his way to trains of thought the most solemn, important, and exalted.

Even those who (I fear with some prejudice and captiousness) offered strictures on our eloquent friend's departures from more ordinary methods, yet carried home, it may be judged, a stronger impression than they might have done from many a discourse framed more carefully by rules of proportion and completeness. I have heard of a country hearer's relating with something like critical scorn, how Mr. Foster began his sermon by telling the village congregation of his having waited in a shower (while on his way to preach to them) beneath a great oak tree ; and of what thoughts had then occupied him as to the things which had heretofore taken place there,—changes in the world while that tree had been growing,—idol worship which might have been performed under a yet more ancient tree near the same spot but since fallen, of which that was then perhaps an acorn,—strokes of death on young and old, on the lords of the soil and the tillers of it, since that tree budded as a sapling,—all or most of which things, the rural critic averred, were as well known to the hearers as to the speaker.

But the critic's hearer answered, "Even this introductory part of the sermon, which you set light by, seems nevertheless to have fixed your attention very deeply, since you report it so fully."

I revert from these observations, which have been chiefly on our friend's public discourses, to some further slight notices of his private intercourse. Let me first venture to refer to one or two tendencies in conversational habits, which, as I have sometimes felt in his society, there might be occasion to regret ; deeming it right to mention these, in order that my sketches, though so exceedingly imperfect, may not be consciously unfaithful. Some thoughtful Christians who had the privilege of occasionally associating with Mr. Foster, did regret that he passed not more habitually and extensively from the sphere of things secular into that of things ultra-mundane and unseen, where he could at once please, surprise, and edify us by lifting each hearer, boldly and felicitously, above his own unaided reach of thought. When he did so ascend, this was the sure result. We are certain also that from his unfeigned devotement to the cause and hopes of religion, and his lofty, solemn views of the Deity, the universe, and all spiritual existence, such topics must have been highly congenial to his mind. I doubt not that both myself and others, who have regretted that they did not occupy a more large and constant share of our intercourse, were each in part responsible for not having elicited as fully as we might and ought to have done, the sacred eloquence of one from whom we should have derived so much to exalt and animate the Christian spirit.

In seeking to account for the habits and tendencies of such a man, one feels that the originality and depth of his character (and, I may add, his reserve on matters personal) must render the study very dubious and the guesses probably often wrong. Here accordingly would have been the special occasion for that auto-biography ("a man's writing memoirs of himself") which is, as we before remarked, the only profound and sufficient biography in any case ; though even there the depth and sufficiency can be expected only from a truly introspective as well as Christian mind. The nearest approach to this, supposing intimate connexions and domestic friends to be any way adequately qualified, would be by them and by them only. Letters, however, are often of the very nature of auto-biography ; as will be doubtless found in many passages of the preceding correspondence.

But to search into our friend's internal self, and the actings of his intellect and will, was like an attempt (so at least *I* felt) to explore a cave full of recesses, which you could not enter.

A rapid sparkling stream, not without "gold dust,"\* flowed from it; but its windings and the well-head were far out of ken. His real habits of thought, feeling, and action, remained in some points more than usually hidden, and occasionally enigmatic, even to those who studied him most. And the more, on account of a certain reserve, excellent in its motives and spirit, already glanced at and to which I shall advert again. My own idea, however, of the chief key to some of his characteristics, is this. Mr. Foster had a keen, deep feeling, at once mournful and indignant, of "the evil that is in the world;" especially in its varied forms of base selfishness—fraud, injustice, oppression;—and above all of the aggravation which these sins must have, from the greater gifts and trusts of the delinquents, when practised by the prosperous, instructed, and ruling classes. He had a strong and earnest conviction, that these evils ought to be boldly and persistively exposed, denounced, and warred against. There were also probably, combining with this, the lessons of his own experience how soon and often high theological questions, and moral or philosophical speculations closely connected with these, lead into thickets where we gather no fruits, but rather wound and entangle each other and ourselves with the brambles of those cold and twilight wildernesses.

He disliked, moreover, as I conjecture, both the seeming affectation or prejudicial narrowness of dwelling mainly on simple and experimental religious topics, and the apparent pride of always mounting to the ideal and remote. But still more than this I think it was the prevalent bias of his mind, to reckon on the greater likelihood of effecting good in conversation by what came home to men's daily life and business, and by discussing the great social interests of mankind. Thus he felt it a duty to return to the view of "our bad world," as he sometimes called it, and oftenest perhaps to matters of a civil or ecclesiastical, or national and international character. To protest against great evils in high places, to expose political abuses and oppressions, to censure the vices of men of the world, or the inconsistencies of professed Christians, he accounted the most probable means of really influencing the state of society, and, while courageously bearing a part in the contest against palpable ills, ultimately promoting good of the very highest kind. Doubtless his writings, particularly the "Essay on Popular Ignorance,"—which Mac-

\* A figure used in his Lectures.

intosh is said to have pronounced one of the most able and original works of the age,—must have had great silent influence towards the political and educational changes that have marked our times. But I am of opinion, that in conversation, where all is usually less measured, and in some parts of his epistolary correspondence, if our revered friend had expatiated more on themes above the range of party feeling, there might have been in these departments more progress towards his whole object—that of opposing evil and advancing good. His mind, so commanding, so full of resource, so essentially benevolent, might thus, it appears to me, without compromise of conscientious opinions, have enlarged its scope and opportunity of social usefulness. At the same time I utterly reject all such explanations of his conduct in these points 'as party spirit and detraction would gladly devise, and vulgar or malignant minds might readily adopt.

Mr. Foster's deep aversion to whatever was meanly or unfeelingly selfish, sometimes prompted him to express his scorn or condemnation by keen satire or by stern reproof. In a letter to me, he thus forcibly describes the lot of a worthy dependent under a narrow-minded and exacting employer.—“I saw him sinking almost to the dust, in the hard service of that most mean and selfish mortal, the late ——. He was longing to escape from a slavery poorly paid, and under which his health was evidently perishing. The good man has escaped from all the long grievances of a very suffering life, and I have suffered no loss by the attempt to save him.”

One sort of instance which specially awakened in him such feelings, was that sophistry of low ambition which induced dereliction of principles for advancement's sake, by men of genius and talent. Contempt of this appeared to impel him the farther and more decidedly in an opposite direction.

Perhaps also his mental constitution fitted him rather for the office of a censor, than for milder habits of intercourse with those from whom he strongly differed. He felt, I doubt not, that “the fear of man” (to which he was as superior as most) still “bringeth a snare;” and his spirit resembled that of ancient prophets in an unshrinking maintenance of what he held to be truth.

Not that our friend could be harsh or uncourteous to those whom he deemed really good men; though he might be at first somewhat slow to believe them such, when their party and opinions were very unlike his own. But, once persuaded of this,



he became affable, candid, and considerate of their position, and the tribute of his esteem must in some cases have been felt to be the more unquestionable and valuable, because whenever it was given to persons in high office or station, or to possessors of wealth, it was certainly not for, but notwithstanding, these circumstances ; which had, in his mind, no conciliating influence.

That may be truly said of Mr. Foster generally, which I have instanced in his deportment to my beloved mother ; no man of equal powers was perhaps ever found so free from pride, assumption, or impatience, towards those whom he judged sincere Christians ; so much a pattern of leniency, gentleness, and cordiality, towards the "least," when he thought them governed by right and pious principles. He was never harsh or distantial to the weak and poor. And when towards others he used sarcasm, it was distinctly for the cause of religion, justice, wisdom, and benevolence, however he might occasionally mistake in estimating what he deemed adverse to these.

A small but characteristic practical specimen of his satiric and humane feelings in conjunction, occurred, when, nearly forty years ago, I passed a summer evening with him at the house of one of my relatives. Some youths were fishing with a net in a stream not far off, and it was proposed that we should look at their "sport." A few little fishes were caught, and thrown upon the grass ; when Mr. Foster, without a word, quickly took up each and threw all again into the stream : leaving us to construe the deed as best we might. Doubtless he was resolved to prolong the life and enjoyment which what is called sport had been abridging, while he shrewdly marked, by sport inverted, his estimate of that which commonly bears the name ; "sport to the strong" (as it was long since said), "but death to the feeble." And truly, notwithstanding the grave patronage for that particular sport, and the animating excitement of some others, it would seem passing strange, were it not for confirmed habit, to hear of a tribe of rationals, one favorite class of whose *amusements* consisted in skilfully destroying life.

Yet there are far greater cruelties than those of rural sports, in the vastly extended and perpetual mal-treatment both of "creatures dying for the service of man," and of "those that serve him by their life." Against these our eloquent friend has publicly and indignantly protested. "An inconceivable daily amount of suffering, inflicted on unknown thousands of creatures,



dying in slow anguish, when their death might be without pain as being instantaneous, is accounted no deformity in our social system, no incongruity with the national profession of a religion of which the essence is charity and mercy.”\*

Mr. Foster was signally distinguished by that rare negative quality, the absence of “egoism.” Never was this spirit discovered in him in those potent and substantial forms of selfishness or self-seeking which the French word here borrowed includes. But very observable also was the exclusion of that slighter and more petty form of it (too common with those who have won a share of public esteem), which we English term egotism. Before being conversant with the human mind at large, and with the defects of Christians, such a foible could not be expected to prevail in any discerning and instructed persons. It must be daily checked in our age of extended mental culture, when some facility in public speaking, and some attainments in literature or science, are become so altogether common, and when the production of respectable prose or verse in types forms hardly a greater distinction than in the days of our remote forefathers a fair handwriting and fixed orthography were. When we have learned something of the distance and multitude of worlds, and have also in our hands dictionaries of the great number of the literate in our small world, and catalogues of their countless works, self-conceit increasingly betrays littleness and folly.

How much more then should it be repressed by our belief in the existence of “angels” and “spirits” exalted far above us, and of that infinite Intelligence who “made the stars,” and “meted out the heavens.”

In real Christians, therefore, egotism might be supposed (before experience) to be quite precluded by the continual sense of its vast inconsistency. But experience teaches us that “old Adam” is, if one may so express it, at once too strong and too weak for such thoughts of wisdom and right-mindedness fully to prevail. The fault still too much inheres in man’s contracted and self-idolizing mind, even when intellectually and morally enlarged by being spiritually renewed. One has heard and read of literary and scientific “men of the world,” whose egotism was even ludicrously conspicuous; and I have known one or two Christians, eminent in their religious and lettered circles, in whom this weakness was too much uncorrected. It is fostered, as life advances,

\* “Essay on Popular Ignorance.” Edit. ii., p. 147.

by the curiosity of others as to persons that have attained a certain note, whose questions often draw them into it unawares. Yet in "the highest style of man" this habit will doubtless be carefully controlled. Our friend afforded a remarkable instance of the complete avoidance or suppression of it. Like that Newton of whose surpassing powers he has expressed such unqualified admiration,\* he betrayed no self-importance. Of himself, his sayings, his writings, his doings, he never willingly talked; and it might be partly from a keen perception of the littleness of egotism in a sage, and its unseemliness in a believer, that he approached the contrary extreme, and so sparingly disclosed his personal feelings.

A well-known habit of Mr. Foster's conversation was that which is often suggested as profitable, especially in youth—the asking of one's companions, respectively, such information as each is best prepared to furnish; with the threefold aim of gaining knowledge, of enabling others to impart it, and of giving them the pleasant impression that their company and information have some value.

This practice was carried into his later life. The thirst for knowledge, both of men and things, with the temper of courtesy, and the absence of vanity, combined in his case to prompt and to prolong it. Thus he rather drew forth conversation than dictated or ruled it; having, indeed, a general readiness for any sort of blameless topic, from the most profound to the most familiar. A farm servant or a lover of old folios, a soldier or a weaver, a missionary or a miner, found him alike inclined (as I recollect by sundry instances) to elicit and welcome what each best could tell.

He had also the rare excellence of being a patient hearer; never showing eagerness to engross attention himself, never anticipating or interrupting others, except sometimes to aid them. Few, I should think, whose talents (and it may be added whose satiric and disputative powers) were so felt and recognized, can have caused so little of fear or constraint, even in the young and diffident, when they were well disposed. The profane and irreligious might, indeed, with great reason dread his rebuke; nor were the vain and frivolous secure. I have seen a young man in his company, acute and informed, but piquing himself on the "exquisite" in dress, who seemed instinctively ill at ease lest a shaft should fly, which silk and velvet were not proof against. A pedant or

\* *Essays*, Edit. xvii., p. 216.

boaster might have fared worse, and some ladies might be scared by the severe student who had talked of "ambulating blocks for millinery." But wherever he saw simplicity, sincerity, and modesty, his evident and successful aim was to inspire confidence and ease. Christian principle no doubt prompted this; in other words true self-knowledge, which is in effect humility.

It was in the smallest companies that our friend was most social and complacent. He had no turn for discoursing to a whole circle, like those talkers who (as has been said of De Stael) are "admirable in monologue." His true conversational element and place was the fireside of a very few friends, agreeing in the main with himself, from whom, however, he claimed no deference, but with whom he felt a cordial freedom. That the reception of some visitors was quite unwelcome to him, as a heavy tax on time, might well be presumed, and is pretty strongly stated in a letter to myself, mentioning residence in a city as "a thing to the last degree undesirable. *There,*" he continues, "besides many other things to be deprecated, the soothsayers predicted there would be one other 'plague.' There is an aggravation of this direful pest in — from its being a place very much frequented by people from a distance, who, 'as they happened to *be* there, would do themselves the pleasure of calling on you,' as Mr. Jay used to complain at Bath. These polite personages would have thought it wrong—oh, very wrong indeed!—to come to your house to steal a silver spoon, or the like, but thought themselves conferring a favor by calling on you to rob you of hours of your valuable time; time in which you were, perhaps, severely pressed to accomplish some mental task incumbent on you."

Indeed, nothing has been more fully announced by him than the high value which he attached to every "talent," and to time especially as the grand requisite and substratum for using and improving the rest. Of a sermon from him (1805) on Psalm xc. 12, I find the following note, "Those people who are not in the habit of estimating a day as a serious portion of time, or feeling regret at having trifled it away, but who lose it with apparent unconcern, will generally be found to be trifling life away on the whole account, and adding day to day without improvement." Yet, at least in reference to the conduct and plan of others, he did not urge, as to the distribution and expenditure of time, an unqualified strictness. In a letter of 1812 he writes:—"All this apology would itself just as much *want* an apology, if it should seem to you (which I earnestly hope it will not) to carry an appearance

as if my time were put under some extraordinarily rigorous discipline, and occupied with employments of which an interesting discussion with a friend would be an unwelcome interruption. Nothing can be further from the truth than this."

A letter of 1820 contains the following passage:—"In favor of a mind too prone to melancholy musings, and a kind of pensive subsidence, I have no doubt that the most rigid morality and religion will give a full sanction to many liberties and expedients for exhilaration, especially excursions in quest of the interest and instruction afforded by seeing the diversities of nature and man."

Mr. Foster was a genuine lover of "natural scenery," and his admiration dwelt much on its separate features, even more perhaps than on the varied whole and its combined effect. I have known him linger by a huge ancient tree in the park of Longleat, still reluctant to quit the spot, and as if half ready to take root near its giant trunk. A much valued friend, a lady with whom he visited many beautiful spots in our neighborhood, speaks of the difficulty with which he was persuaded to quit the top of "Alfred's Tower," at Stourhead, where the panoramic prospect riveted him. In the same mood he would gaze untiringly on a waterfall, or the rushing of a rapid stream. The habits of his mind exemplified the statement of Coleridge concerning "the great book of nature," that "it has been the music of gentle and pious minds in all ages; it is the *poetry* of all human nature, to read it in a figurative sense, and to find therein correspondencies and symbols of the spiritual world."\*

Eminently was he one of those whom he has himself described as finding "the wide field of nature a scene marked all over with mystical figures, the prints and traces, as it were, of the frequentation and agency of superior spirits. They find it sometimes concentrating their faculties to curious and minute inspection, sometime dilating them to the expansion of vast and magnificent forms; sometimes beguiling them out of all precise recognition of material realities, whether small or great, into visionary musings; and habitually and in all ways conveying into the mind trains and masses of ideas of an order not to be acquired in the schools, and exerting a modifying and assimilating influence on the whole mental economy."†

\* The Statesman's Manual, Appendix B., p. 267, second edition, reprinted with his Essay on the Constitution of the Church and the State, 1839.

† Vide Eclectic Review, May, 1814, p. 462; or "Contributions," &c., Vol. II., p. 436.

This subject, though it seem to have no immediate relation to that of our friend's devotional exercises, will appositely lead us to it; for I have been told by valued relatives who, soon after a tour in North Wales, happened to come into his company, that having asked them many questions about the chief mountains and romantic views, he afterwards, in the social prayer of the evening, made striking reference to the wisdom and goodness of God in providing at once for our instruction and enjoyment in those grand and beautiful scenes of which they had conversed.

His domestic and public prayers (more especially perhaps the former) are well known to have been very peculiar. They were in some sort *meditative*, but should rather be designated as markedly *specific*; dwelling and dilating on one or a very few points, instead of touching more cursorily on many. No doubt the attention of the thoughtful who joined in them was more sure to be fixed; but the less intelligent had, I apprehend, some difficulty in *fully* joining with the eminently thoughtful speaker. This was probably greater, for the same hearer, in attending to his prayers than to his discourses, because elucidations or illustrations of thought could not in the former be added.

In this respect it appears to me that our friend's prayers were not the best adapted for "the many:" but for persons at all akin by thoughtfulness to himself, they were most impressive by calm solemnity and by true sublimity. They did not betoken overflowing or quickly excitable emotions; but they did indicate such as were earnest and profound, tempered in the moulds of unborrowed thought; a cast of feeling often more fixed and practical than that which springs from impulses more sudden and more ardent.

Of these remarks, already perhaps too extended, it may be said by some,—the nonconformists having few men of note among them, are prone, when such arise, to magnify the individual's talents and doings, with a favoritism which betrays either want of knowledge or willing forgetfulness as to the many distinguished names in larger and more learned communions, where the frequency of great endowments abates the fame of each, and precludes the conspicuousness of almost all.

Without pleading guilty to such a charge, we may yet admit that there is some risk of an over-estimation of what is rare, and of a certain magniloquence about it: some added danger of "glorying in men," where, as to genius and acquirements, there

are comparatively few in whom to glory. It concerns us all, of whatever community, to bear in mind that ancient expostulation, "Cease ye from man whose breath is in his nostrils, for wherein is he to be accounted of!"

The religious body to which Mr. Foster belonged is, in the old world, one of the less numerous, and not one of the most lettered. It was formerly remarked to me, by an able minister of a larger denomination, "Among you Baptists extremes prevail—one or two mountains, and a good many mole-hills:"—his reference being obviously to Hall and Foster. No wonder, then, if we should make much of our rare mountains, and confining our view for the time to that district in which we stand, should be apt to think them unrivalled.

I hope, however, that nothing has really been here offered in the spirit of exaggeration or boasting. A very different lesson is assuredly impressed on us by meditating on the successive departure of those who have been lights in the world, and by witnessing the bodily infirmities which at length, in the order of God's providence, weigh down the greatest minds. We feel how all distinctions fade into comparative unimportance, and almost vanish out of thought, before the great fact of death, and the vast unveiling of futurity. With a life which is "even a vapor," and—if aught in the universe be real—with a boundless reality so near, what do all advantages or elevations in the one amount to, except as affecting the other? The grave of our distinguished friend, or the chair and couch of his last debility and pain, are, for each of us, "posts" of solemn "observation," at which all earthly attainments and successes appear, except in their reference to what shall be everlasting, alike in littleness; and all the varied events of time resemble the brief differences of bygone dreams, the untoward, or painful, or attractive.

When we observe, and perhaps have felt, the eagerness and zeal with which so many covet and besiege the honors, prizes, and "great things" of this world, one might almost think it was expected, as one of the victories of modern science, to live here always; or at least to have the longevity of patriarchs renewed; while yet disease and death, so continual and imminent about our path, evermore rebuke the illusion.

Mr. Foster had very long suffered from a chronic disorder of the bronchial glands, which indeed had obliged him, thirty-seven years before, to relinquish, amidst the regrets of his friends and

hearers, the pastoral office at Frome, though it was afterwards for a time resumed elsewhere. Even in the prime of life he often endured much pain and local harm, in the discourses and prolonged conversations which edified and delighted many. But in latter years he had been forbidden, on account of much more threatening symptoms, to speak at all in public. He submitted to this affliction, and the consequent disability for one chief kind of endeavor to be useful, I have reason to believe, with uncomplaining patience. When, about five weeks before his removal from the world, I visited our suffering friend for the last time, I had been apprised of an increase of illness, and difficulty of conversing, which would limit me to a short interview; yet had no apprehension, even after observing his changed appearance, that his spirit would so soon be summoned to its better home. He came down from his chamber to see me in the customary sitting-room, and although his thin and pale looks indicated great debility, conversed in his usual manner. I think I noticed to him the blessing of having the intellectual powers so entirely unimpaired during illness; to which he answered, "It is a comfort even to understand what is read and heard."

I then referred to the melancholy mental decay of the late distinguished Southey; on which Mr. Foster remarked, "No doubt his mind was worn out by the toil of building up many books; as if there were a want, a *famine* of books." "So it is" (he added with a smile), "there are men who even apologize for their errors and haste, and for not delaying in order to greater correctness, as if the world were laboring under a dearth of the article." I replied, "Consider, dear sir, you are speaking to one of the culprits;" to which he rejoined, "No, hardly that, yet." I said to his daughter, who sat by, "We all wish Mr. Foster had been *more* a culprit." He then intimated, "Perhaps we may wish this at times, now that nothing more can be done;" adding, "Much has been omitted every way, partly from trifling. One feels that in the great concern of religion, much more might have been done." I observed, "All, however, no doubt, is for the best." To which our friend replied, "Yes, in the deep sense. These feelings of defect serve to humble us, and to show that in ourselves we are nothing." I said, "It is happy, sir, that you have good daughters near you. Even a son would not be able to afford such aid and solace." He answered, "Yes, indeed, they are very kind." The following sentiment was also uttered

by him with peculiar seriousness: "How dreary would old age and illness be without the great doctrine of the Atonement!" I left him, bearing with me a deep impression of that thought; but certainly not with the apprehension that in this world we should meet no more. It was however so appointed. He and many more whom we revered and loved are gone; and though some remain whom we dearly prize, what would life itself be without hope in "the glorious gospel," but an apparition, and departure, and oblivion of shadows?

With what a tone of utterly cold and thoughtless unconcern do we sometimes hear the fact mentioned, even by professed Christians,—“he *died* :” “he is *dead*.” Nay, in how cursory and unthinking a manner have we frequently named it ourselves! And yet the feeling of awful strangeness, of momentous novelty, which at times pervades us, when for an instant, we have had, as it were, realizing flashes of that event as indeed at hand, is one which all earthly symbols of thought, spoken or written, are powerless to arrest, and image, and disclose. The silent, lonely transit of a conscious and reflective spirit—a being which is profoundly accountable to its Divine Author—from all connection with this bodily life, and with this visible world, into a new mode of existence, unknown and unconceived and illimitable, must ever be the most mysterious and awfully deciding change on which our meditation can be fixed: and the solemnity of it is inevitably and justly heightened, in proportion to the greatness of the individual spirit’s capacities, and consequent responsibilities.

How painful therefore the thought, that so many of the most powerful and expanded minds have, to all appearance, left this earthly state, without seeking a right and availing preparedness for the vast hereafter, by faith in the One Sacrifice, and renovation from the Infinite Spirit. Remembering these with sadness and awe, we turn for a relieving contrast to the contemplation of those instances (with the hope that they may soon be far more multiplied) where the special and abounding grace of God has consecrated to his own service his highest intellectual gifts. As we meditate on these—and indeed on all the servants of God who have entered his rest, or will follow thither—the event, still so painful and awful in itself, is viewed rather in its peaceful and felicitous result; justifying a forcible and singular expression which I remember our friend once used to me. He had been referring to some gloomy facts and thoughts which cloud and



darken the whole horizon of life ; but then added—"there is however one luminary—it is the visage of Death." When we think how often, in our own age, genius has lamentably misused its treasures, by such productions and social communications as are remembered in life's last days with inexpressible sorrow,—it is indeed matter for high and solemn thankfulness, to review such a course as that of our departed friend ; a course of resolved piety and genuine benevolence ; a dedication from early life to the advancement of the religion of Christ : to dwell on his memory as a devoted servant and worshipper of that supreme Lord who has called him from us ; one who deeply adored the Infinite Benefactor as revealed through his beloved Son, and really "endured as seeing Him who is invisible." Few spirits can have passed away from earth, endowed with more of intellectual grasp and penetration to meet the wonders and grandeurs of regions immense and untraversed :—few also I believe with a more profound persuasion, that as creatures, however endowed, admired, or dignified, "in ourselves we are nothing," but yet that, if true supplicants and recipients of the divine grace, then, "life and death, things present, things to come, are ours : " since "we are Christ's, and Christ is God's."

You will deeply feel with me, dear sir, how earnest should be our wish and prayer, that many more of those whose powers and acquirements might render them, in the happiest sense, "lights burning and conspicuous,"\* may attain the same faith and devotion, the same humility and hope, instead of forgetting God, while idolizing the world and themselves.

Believe me,

Yours very sincerely,

J. S.

\* John v. 35. Compare Phil. ii. 15

**NINE LETTERS**  
**ADDRESSED TO MISS SARAH SAUNDERS,**  
**DURING HER LAST ILLNESS ;**  
**PRECEDED BY A BRIEF MEMOIR ;**  
**BY**  
**JOHN FOSTER.**



## ADVERTISEMENT.

---

SARAH SAUNDERS (to whom the nine following letters were addressed) was the eldest daughter of John Saunders, Esq., solicitor, of Plymouth. The opening mind of this singularly-gifted child was distinguished by strong reasoning powers, general intellectual pre-eminence, and a prodigious memory; together with the habit of exercising, from earliest life, an independent judgment on whatever subject happened to engage her attention. These striking qualities early attracted the notice of Mr. Foster (for at the age of four she removed to Bristol); and as he often saw, and traced the rapid development of her faculties, so he was delighted, in his condescension, occasionally, as time advanced, to engage with her in some argument. On these occasions she maintained her opinions, although with deference, with great animation, and in the most appropriate language; acknowledging an error alone when her understanding was satisfied. Mr. Foster once declared, that he had never met with any young person, male or female, comparable to Sarah Saunders, for ingenious, varied, and even felicitous conversation.

The character of her mind may be estimated by one or two anecdotes, out of numerous others. However trifling in themselves, they derive a reflected value from the subsequent letters, and which letters will be the better understood by these slight preliminary remarks.

Before the age of four years, having failed in some small duty, her mother remarked to her, "Sarah, do you not know that it is said in scripture, 'Children, obey your parents?'" "Yes," she replied, "and directly after it takes the part of the poor children, and says, 'Fathers, provoke not your children to wrath.'"

At the age of five (during a brief residence at Plymouth), a friend lent her Pope's Homer, which she devoured, and became a decided *Grecian*. Soon after its perusal, a lady, with feathers, came into her mother's drawing-room, and approached to kiss the infant in the mother's arms; when the child turned away, scared with the nodding plumes; on which the lady, perceiving the cause of the alarm, placed her bonnet on the table, and then came and saluted the child. Little Sarah Saunders marked the incident, and then enthusiastically repeated:—

"The glittering terrors from his brow unbound,  
And placed the beaming helmet on the ground."

At an age when most others would be considered as in a state of infancy, Mr. Montgomery's "World before the Flood," just then published, was lent to her; into which she at once eagerly plunged, and to the great credit of the poet, read the whole of it *at a sitting*. Being asked which of the characters she most admired, she at once answered, "*Satan!*" and for which preference she was prepared to assign her infantine reasons!

Being introduced to Hannah More, young as she was, Mrs. More said, knowing her taste for reading, "My dear little girl, what was the last book you read?" To which Sarah Saunders, with great simplicity, replied, "A cookery book, Ma'am." "Oh, that's right;" smiling, answered the experienced lady, "The child, thirsting for knowledge, reads indiscriminately. It is for maturity to select."

But now, to pass over much that might be said, to more important considerations. When the complaint, of which Sarah Saunders died at the age of eighteen (consumption), was beginning to assume a fatal aspect, a relative suggested to Mr. Foster,—who was regarded by the sufferer with the highest veneration,—that a few lines from him in her circumstances, might be acceptable and useful. To this he readily assented; and his first letter was well received, and beneficial in its effects. As the disease was rapidly advancing, his sympathy became more excited, and in extending his communications, each successive letter increased in faithfulness and in intensity of feeling.

The end of Sarah Saunders was now manifestly approaching, so that Mr. Foster was doubtful whether it would be proper to have the last, and ninth, letter presented to her, and therefore sent it under cover to her uncle, Mr. Joseph Cottle of Bristol, with the following note.

"*Stapleton, February 7, 1825.*

"MY DEAR SIR,—I have again endeavored to assemble a few ideas, in aid of the serious reflections and consolatory anticipations of our dear young friend. You will give the letter at whatever time you think proper.

"I am, my dear Sir, yours most truly,

"JOHN FOSTER."

J. C.

## MEMOIR.

---

SARAH SAUNDERS, who died in February, 1825, in her nineteenth year, after an illness of six months, was strikingly distinguished throughout her short life, by the qualities of her character. In very early childhood she displayed a force and extent of intellect which placed her quite out of the class to which by her age she belonged. She had, indeed, the vivacity and activity of that age; but over these, and in them, there predominated an energy of mind. She would surprise her relatives and friends with conceptions and inquiries, so far beyond the ordinary reach of childish thought as to draw on her a sudden examining look, as it were, to see that the utterer of them really *was* a child. She would listen with the utmost attention to conversations on subjects the most foreign to childish interests. It is, for instance, remembered that once, at the age of seven, she was extremely indignant at being removed, at her usual evening hour of going to rest, from listening to an old gentleman, a noted political partizan, talking in a spirited manner on the national affairs of France. She said she should have been delighted to hear him a great deal longer, adding, "And I thought as he did." She would sometimes read uninterruptedly for many hours, with an attention not to be diverted by surrounding objects and movements.

Corresponding to this prematurity of intelligence was her facility, in that earliest, and in the more advanced stages of her life, of acquiring, and with a peculiar comprehension and accuracy, every kind of knowledge included in the regular course of education. And that was perhaps but the minor part of the knowledge which she was continually acquiring, since her mind was carried with great inquisitiveness and interest far out of the routine of mere school occupation, to become conversant with various subjects, and especially with the history of great events and eminent characters.

From earliest childhood she had much less than the usual measure of easy, undistinguishing, and implicit *assent*. It was always necessary for her to feel that she *understood* what she was to admit; her penetration instantly perceiving what was vague or equivocal in the things asserted or inculcated. And when the representation was clearly intelligible, she would require the proof of its truth or reasonableness, and would fix on any defect of that proof with intellectual quickness and

persisting objection. She was not to be satisfied or beguiled by evasion, or general and unmeaning language, nor made to acquiesce in the dictates of mere authority. This character of mind rendered the instructor's office difficult, and sometimes very perplexing, as a counterbalance to the singular pleasure of having the charge of so intelligent a spirit.

In forming opinions, even in that early period, she had remarkable independence of thought and positiveness of conviction. And this determined character of intellect was combined with a kindred moral temperament. As decided in her *will* as in her judgment, she would resolutely adhere to her purposes, or to her avowed preferences, in spite of her purposes being overruled. This was in her a quality of far higher order than mere obstinacy of temper, inasmuch as the determination of her will involved a vigorous exercise of thought, through which it took the shape of at least plausible reason and argument. The inflexibility thus created could not, however, but sometimes cause considerable embarrassment to her elder relatives, to whom it belonged to direct and control her. She had an habitually predominant rectitude of intention, to prevent her acting wilfully wrong; but then she would be herself the judge of what was right. So that when she practically submitted, in compliance with their will, it would be done in the manner of one who concedes a point, in deference to established regulations, and not as admitting the justice of the requirement in itself.

To complete this strength of character, she possessed an extraordinary courage. It seemed as if she were constituted to be dismayed by nothing. There was thus a principle of congeniality in the warm admiration which she always felt for the energetic and heroic class of characters, as exhibited in history or fiction. And there can be no doubt that, on the supposition of her having attained the maturity of life, and being then led into a train of extraordinary difficulties, or thrown into scenes of peril and disaster, she would have evinced a spirit equal to every situation, and have acted with distinguished fortitude, consistency, and perseverance.

If the description of such a conformation of qualities, carried forward through the progress of youth, should be understood to imply an unattractive and repellent character, it would be a very great mistake. She laid a strong and tenacious hold on the regard of all within the circle of her connexions and acquaintance.

In childhood, as has been already said, she had much of the grace and sprightliness appropriate to that morning of life; while the animation was the more captivating for the mental vividness which shone in it. She had always an inviolable regard to truth, so that the most implicit reliance could be placed on everything she declared or promised. And in action she had a strong sense of the obligation of rendering justice, while she claimed it. She was grateful to those from whom she experienced kindness, affectionate to those whom she esteemed, and capable of being deeply and ardently so to those whom she should esteem in the

highest degree. As she approached maturity, her improving reason, her extremely nice and accurate perception, and her conscience of duty, regulated and attempered the force of her character. Her freedom of opinion, and the assurance which she necessarily possessed from superior intelligence and knowledge, were accompanied with an unobtrusive modesty; and she had no assumption in social intercourse but that which was inseparable from conscious ability. She was a most attentive listener to the sentiments of others, with a constant desire to gain improvement. At the same time, she was vigilantly observant of their characters, of which her estimates were formed with decision, but generally with discrimination and equity, and a considerate attention to propriety as to where and in what terms she pronounced them. She was the most liable to be swayed from impartiality in favor of superior talent.

In one sense of the word *simplicity*, she possessed that quality in perfection; that is to say, an entire freedom from all little artifice, dissimulation, affectation, and devices of display. She had too much sincerity and honest directness of principle, too little vanity, and too settled an internal confidence, to admit their being compatible with her nature. It was not, therefore, by any studied care that she avoided them; they were simply foreign to the constitution of her character. She was undesirous of attracting notice or admiration, appearing much more interested in the subject itself, than at any time called forth her mind in social converse, than about any consideration of the figure she should be deemed to make in discoursing on it. She often would evidently be occupied with the subject *alone*, while those in her company were occupied with the subject and *her*. It would often strike them how clear she was of all petty design and self-reference, in giving her mind to the social discussion and conflict of sentiments. The pertinacity which she would sometimes manifest appeared to be not that of competition, but of sincere opinion, maintained not because she had asserted it, but because she could not see better reasons for surrendering it.

Simplicity in *another* sense, that of disclosing without reserve all that was within, could not, perhaps, belong to such a mind. She loved social converse, entered into it with great readiness and spirit, and was often, according to the common expression, the "life" of it; yet her friends, while they were always certain of the candid sincerity of whatever she *did* communicate, could perceive that the most lively and amicable freedom of intercourse still left something behind reserved from social commerce; that there was, as it were, a retired apartment in her mind, where she had thoughts and feelings of her own secluded from inspection. They would often wish they could have access to that reserved interior, and were led sometimes into an almost impatient exercise of imagination to conjecture what might be there existing or passing. It was not, however, from any principle of designing concealment, or self-protective caution, that her most intimate consciousness was thus silent and veiled;



but from a natural insuperable indisposition to make her own mind, and its own exclusive interests, a subject of communication; an indisposition probably confirmed by finding among the many co-evals with whom she was associated in education, but little of such congeniality as would have drawn her out by sympathy. For though mingling with them often in the enjoyment of a lively activity, with a rival juvenility of alert and excitable spirits, she still felt she was, as to her own peculiar internal self, alone. Thus at once she was practically, and to a considerable extent, cordially social, and yet mentally apart.

At the same time it appeared, as another characteristic feature, that this limited communicativeness did not cause her any pain or restlessness, any fretting, impatient emotions, that she could not be in more complete reciprocation. All that she felt exclusively belonging to her own spirit and its operations she could keep to herself, with a calm independence of social relation; and this without anything of austerity, or alienation from society.

She did, however, in her long illness, regret one effect of this reserve and exclusiveness in her mental habitude—the extreme indisposition and difficulty which she felt to converse freely on the subject of religion, as relative to her own situation and prospects. This difficulty was not overcome till near the termination of her life.

After a representation of so much of the *strong* qualities in her character and habits, it is the more proper to mention, that she was the reverse of what is commonly meant by the epithet *masculine*, as applied in a disadvantageous sense to any of the female sex. Her manners, always simple and natural, were as refined and feminine as her slight and graceful form. A stranger, who should have happened to notice a girl of rather diminutive proportions, marked with every delicacy of person and deportment, and speaking (if he had heard her speak), in a voice singularly soft and sweet, might have been incredulous to the information, what intrepid firmness, decision of resolve, and intellectual force, had their dwelling in that form. Her countenance, beautiful in the usual sense of the word, possessed also something much beyond mere physical beauty,—a mental lustre, in the vivid and changing expression of intelligence and feeling.

Distinguished by such a combination of qualities—the description of which might appear, to a person unacquainted with her, of questionable consistency with one another and with her age, but it is true in every part—she grew up in constant and uncommonly vigorous health, into her eighteenth year, exciting in her family and friends the highest hopes, not unmingled with many solitudes. But those hopes and cares were destined by the Sovereign Disposer soon to cease. While on a visit to relatives in the immediate environs of London, she slept one night of a sultry summer with little covering, and without having observed (through the blind), that the window had been left open, in the direct current of an air charged with one of the penetrating noxious fogs incident to that

vicinity. A consequent violent inflammation in the chest left, when it subsided, the most threatening symptoms of incipient consumption. After she was removed to her family at Bristol, these symptoms were too plainly progressive, in a slowly increasing debility ; against which, however, the energy of her spirit strove to maintain much of her accustomed activity. And as she suffered little pain, she was not sensible, for a while, how fatally she was sinking ; though it was signified to her pious relatives, by professional judgment, that the result was not dubious. The concern which those excellent relatives had always felt for her highest interests, became too anxious to admit of delay in apprising her of her situation. And as she had not in previous years betrayed any express aversion to religion ; had never, as far as it is known, been sceptical of its truth ; had always paid a respectful attention to its observances, and had read serious books, they were willing to hope that this had been among the subjects which she had silently revolved in her thoughts. But it was, at a late period of her illness, her penitential confession, that from this subject, as a vital personal concern, she had been unhappily estranged.

The information that the disease had the most decided indications of being mortal, was received by her in the first instance with incredulity ; and she did not admit a full conviction till after some further progress of those ominous indications. Yet, before she had come to this entire conviction, she signified, even with emphasis, her gratitude to a friend who had conveyed to her some religious thoughts and advices on the express assumption that, in all probability, she was near the end of life ; showing that she associated no ungracious feeling with the monitor who had spoken in terms of such presage. In yielding, by degrees, to the evidence that her case was so, she betrayed no weakness and but slight perturbation ; uttered no complaints ; manifested no eagerness for expedients and change of expedients, for trial as remedies.

This composure, however, would appear to have been at first fully as much of the nature of a constitutional or philosophic firmness, as of Christian resignation. And it required some progress of time and reflection to bring her mind to the full, decided, habitual earnestness of preparing to appear before her Creator and Judge. The attainment of this state of mind was through degrees which her characteristic reserve rendered difficult to be distinctly perceived by the watchful solicitude of her relations. At some times this suppression of the signs of her deeper thoughts and emotions, together with occasional appearances of a somewhat greater interest than they could have wished her to feel on subjects of inferior importance, made them anxious for evidence that she was completely awake to the most momentous concern. They were not unapprehensive lest the fearless temperament which had always distinguished her, should here have the effect of rendering her too little sensible to even the solemn anticipations which ought irresistibly to agitate the conscience and the passions. But they did not wait and pray for

the divine influences in vain. The welcome proof was given them that she still more and more applied herself to serious and devotional employment; while every effort to assist her attainment of just views and consolatory hopes was received with gratitude. They had cause, besides, not to doubt that the reality exceeded what she was willing to show in appearance, or acknowledge in words, since she had always been remarkable for an aversion to forward professions, and every kind of ostentation; and for such an abhorrence of being estimated above the truth of her character, that she would, at any time in her preceding life, rather keep the best indications in shade than exhibit them. So far from being disposed to exhibit them for the purpose of drawing applause, she would very reluctantly do so for self-justification.

It was a hard and protracted discipline through which she was appointed to pass. She felt with bitterness, sometimes approaching to anguish, how much there was in the temper of her spirit which required to be subdued and transformed to the evangelical character. She deplored that, in her very prayers for that state of mind which she saw to be indispensable, there mingled a pride, an impatience, a defect of submission and faith, which might justly render them unavailing. In a later hour she acknowledged, in recollection of the earlier stage, that the delay of the divine gift of that happy change of feeling which she desired, and the difficulty of maintaining the strife against the opposite tendencies of her mind, had sometimes excited complaining emotions even against heaven, which in reflection alarmed her, and produced a still deeper sense of internal evil.

The conviction of urgent necessity pressed upon her unremittingly; she felt there was absolutely one great object to be obtained. She had no temptation to subside into a confidence in the sufficiency of her uniformly virtuous conduct, and to disown the sovereign claims of God upon the heart. She felt that *there* was the essential state of the character as towards him. And she was a keen inspector and severe judge of the evil that was there. Even the pride which she had to deplore was not a pride of *merit*; but a certain peculiar spirit of independence and self-dominion, which was reluctant to sink and be prostrated in the humiliation of feeling herself destitute of power. Its severest mortification had been in the proof enforced on her by painful experience, that she was unable to subdue the inward perversity which she condemned, and to compel her mind into the state which she desired.

This mortification was a salutary part (and the long unconquered principle of a spirit which had never learnt to yield, required it to be a protracted part) of the discipline to bring her down to the complete surrender of every kind of self-sufficiency, and to a sole reliance on the divine power and mercy, with a simplicity of trust in the merits of Christ. Her attainment of this state, happily attained at length, was gradual and slow; indeed the whole process was painfully slow, both of her yielding to the subduing power of the Christian spirit, and of her admit-

ting its consolations. And these consolations, when admitted, did not mitigate the severity of her self-reproach, for whatever she felt in her heart still unreduced and unconformed to the Christian principles and the divine will. She expressed an apprehension lest the exclusive trust, for all here and hereafter, in the sufficiency of the Redeemer, should, in imparting an assurance of safety, be perverted to the effect of soothing her spiritual cares into a treacherous repose on mere safety, and diminishing her concern for the subduing of all sinful dispositions.

It was a merciful dispensation of Him who had appointed this long and hard process for her soul, that her disease, without ever being equivocal as to the fatal character of its symptoms, advanced, during several months, by very slow degrees, and that all the while she enjoyed the most quiet retirement, and the assiduous and affectionate attendance of a family most anxious to avert every disturbing influence, to alleviate every suffering, and to impart instruction and consolation at every opportune moment.

In the decline of her strength it was very natural she should be reluctant to sink into helplessness and complete dependence; and the insuppressible vigor of her mind maintained a surprising power of even bodily activity during the progressive debilitation of her frame. But she observed that progress, and would, from one week to another, and with a calmness increasing with the diminution of power, notice some particular action which she had been able to perform a little while since, but could now no longer. She had always been an animated admirer of the beauties of nature, and to even a far advanced period of her decline, she was gratified and exhilarated in being taken out on short excursions over the adjacent picturesque country. In the last instance of being borne towards the carriage, she suffered so distressing a seizure as to threaten instant dissolution in the attempt. And then she seemed to feel a mental pang, from this sudden evidence that she had looked on the face of nature for the last time. But it was a transient emotion. In her habitual feelings and meditations, she had already yielded herself up as belonging to death more than to life.

One day, having been at her particular desire left alone with the physician, she requested, in a tone that would not be denied, to be informed how long he should judge it probable she might live. Not without reluctance, and after deliberation, he named the term of six or seven weeks; but intimating also, that her situation was such that any day *might* be the last. Her friends found her perfectly composed, on returning to her after he was gone.

It should seem that, though it was religion that vanquished the fear of death, it was not the sole cause of the willingness which she avowed to part with life. The writer of this memorial of her, congratulating her on having gained a victory over that most natural affection, the love of life, was somewhat surprised to hear her reply, in her easy and unaffectedly decided manner of expression, that *that* was not so much of a conquest, for that she had never been strongly attached to life. It appeared

that, in the bloom and animation of youth, with flattering worldly prospects before her, and while she was the object of the affection and admiration of her friends, she had never been sanguine and romantic as to the possible felicities of the human lot on earth. The tendency so natural to youth, to indulge a warm presumption of those possibilities, had in her been repressed, partly by a clear-sighted observation of the actual conditions of life; among which, she said, in answer to a question on the subject, she had never seen the example of one which she could have been willing to accept for her own.

When such an estimate, formed even in health, of the prospects of life in this world, was combined in far advanced sickness, with the deliberate hope of a better, it was not wonderful to observe the unhesitating, the remarkably absolute though quiet manner, in which she spontaneously said, she would not, supposing it were possible and could be offered to her, return to that life from which she was receding; the only regret which she expressed being, that hers should have been a life in which there had been so little service to God.

The acceleration of disease and debility, in the last few weeks, subjected her to severe suffering, from violent cough, laboriousness of breathing, the difficulty of speaking, and the restlessness of frequent feverish agitation, all pressing on the feebleness of an exhausted frame, and causing also, what she painfully felt, an inability for any continued exercise of thought. And there were moments of insuppressible irritability, which was deplored with a bitterness of self-reproach which her friends regretted as excessive. There was no wane of the clearness and active power of her faculties. There was the same quick perception, acuteness of distinction, and versatility of observation, with occasional pleasing sparkles of vivacity, and with the most prompt excitability to intellectual discourse, in the intervals of somewhat remitted suffering; though this would be too often at the cost of aggravating the return of that suffering. The discriminative quality of her observations and questions required no small effort of mind on the part of those who had to reply.

Her kind and grateful affections, as occasions called them forth, seemed to become more warmly manifested. But what gratified her pious attendants the most was, that she was at length set much at liberty from that reserve which had so long obstructed their intimate knowledge of her religious feelings. She ingenuously disclosed various particulars of the past state of her mind, spoke with freedom and simplicity of her present entire dependence, as a guilty and humbled being, on the divine mercy, as obtained alone through the merits of Jesus Christ; and expressed a calm and brightening hope of happiness hereafter,—a happiness of which the essential principle would be, a deliverance, complete and eternal, from all that places the soul out of harmony with God.

She testified thankfulness for her long sickness itself, and for those attendant circumstances of it which had been so favorable for the course

of discipline through which she had been conducted. Her directions for the disposal of some little concerns, her recollections of the kindness of various friends, her wishes for the welfare of survivors, her references to the truths and consolations of religion, her notice of surrounding occurrences, were all expressed as in the explicit anticipation of the impending change. She beheld the vision of another world growing, in each brief lapse of time, more plainly discernible through the shades of death; and was waiting, in expectation and in readiness, for the signal. She retained an undiminished exercise of intellect, the most perfect presence of mind, in her latest hours. In nearly the last, her devout sentiments toward the supreme Benefactor were mingled with kindness towards the mortal friends she was going to leave; and she named with affectionate gratitude those who had endeavored to aid her preparation for this final scene. As she felt the struggle of the living principle fast subsiding, and when the power of utterance was on the point of wholly failing, she observed (and repeated the expression, "Once to die!"), how truly this was the mysterious act of dying. After every attempt to speak had ceased, and her eyes had closed, a few moments before the last perceptible breathing, she made, by a gentle movement of the hand, a sign which her attendants perfectly understood as expressive of her adieu.

The earthly form, as soon as the spirit was fled, appeared reduced almost to a shadow. Life had been protracted, through the energy of that spirit, till the extreme resources of animal nature were consumed.

The deep regrets of the affectionate relatives for the loss of such a being were consoled by the benignant light of Heaven, which had thus been shed on the concluding period of her life; for amidst their sorrow they could rejoice in the assurance, that through the sovereign efficacy of divine grace and the atoning sacrifice, she is gone to a world where it will be unspeakable delight to meet her again.

---

## LETTERS

FROM MR. FOSTER TO MISS SAUNDERS.

### I.

*Stapleton, September 11, 1824.*

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIEND,—When I tell you that, almost from your childhood, I have taken an unusual degree of interest in your character, and that since you approached to maturity I have been gratified in being regarded by you as one of your sincerest friends, you will allow my claim to the right of expressing to you the deep concern, which I share with your most excellent relatives, for your present state of languor and increasing illness. Your return to your friends was looked for with

very different anticipations. We hoped to see you in firm health, with a vigor fitted, as we were sure it would be devoted, to the zealous prosecution of every valuable improvement, and with the prospects of life extending before you; and you would yourself quite naturally entertain some pleasing and youthful visions in relation to those prospects. But, Miss Sarah, I think I cannot be mistaken in believing, that you were never beguiled, in any such measure as young persons generally are, with the flatteries and delusions of sanguine imagination. I am confident that the forms of temporal hope would often fade under your deep reflection, aided by your observation of actual human life; and that you have fully admitted the conviction, even in the bright morning of life, that *it is really true*—what the warnings of religion, and the testimony of experience constantly affirm to us—that a profound sense of dissatisfaction and disappointment attends on all that this world has to give. And to a mind like yours the solemn idea will, inevitably, have often presented itself,—as one which it were perfect folly to endeavor to exclude and forget,—that the *end* will come, and that the intermediate time will at the longest soon pass away. Therefore, a state of sickness and suffering does not come on you, as it would on the gay and thoughtless young persons, as a mere sad surprise, a melancholy blast of every cherished interest and hope, a disappointment of all your anticipations. It comes as that which many a serious reflection has admonished you *might* come—might come even thus prematurely. And it is most consolatory to your friends to have reason to believe that these reflections have been made conducive, under the Divine instruction, to prepare you for the visitation.

My dear young friend, it would have been delightful to all that best know your value, and the very uncommon measure of mental endowment that heaven has conferred on you, to see you advancing in every virtue and estimable attainment, progressively exemplifying the power of religion, and enjoying its happiness, and exerting a beneficent influence on all around you, with a prospect of your long surviving all of us your elder friends. But if *He*, who is the sovereign and gracious Disposer of our life and all our interests, has determined otherwise, it is, indeed, Miss Sarah, *it is*, because *that will be better*; and you yourself will know and pronounce it to be better. Oh *it is better* to be a happy and immortal being in the presence and enjoyment of the infinite good, and mingling in the society of angelic spirits, and of the “spirits of the just” that are already associated with them, than to stay in this world, in even the happiest lot that Providence ever allots to the most favored of mortals. To make a complete, final, triumphant escape from all the evils of our degraded and afflicted nature, and this melancholy world; to be clearly and for ever beyond the region, and beyond all possibility, of sin and sorrow—this is worth resigning all on earth to attain. It is worth resigning every imagined felicity on earth that you, Sarah, ever ventured, in the most sanguine moment of your musings

and hopes, to picture to yourself as possible to your attainment in this world.

Your pious and estimable father is now inconceivably happier than all whom he left behind. And if you be prematurely called (as human judgment accounts prematurely) to go where he is gone, you will look back on the moment of removal with a divine delight; and not all that is the most desirable and noble on earth will raise in your happy spirit one transient wish that you had had a more protracted appointment here. But, my dear friend, do you shrink from the solemn transition lest the grand interest should not be safe,—lest you should be found unprepared to meet Him, whose summons is to be obeyed? You are too reflective to indulge a thoughtless and presumptuous confidence, and far too well instructed in evangelical truth to place any dependence on merits of your own. That truth requires us to sink, under conscious guilt, in deep humiliation before our righteous Judge, to fall before him in self-condemnation and penitence, but only in order to rise in hope and faith, resting on the *great atonement*. Living or dying we have no other resource; but we have *THIS* resource; and *this* is *all-sufficient*. In the strength of *this*, we can approach the divine throne, to plead for pardon, and to plead against the fear of death; and on the strength of this, how many, on the very brink of death, amidst the shadows and gleams of approaching eternity, have exulted to make the grand and final adventure! and so I trust will my young friend, whenever, be it sooner or later, she shall be called to leave mortality behind.

The grand point is, to be *quite in earnest*, persistingly so, in applying to the heavenly and almighty Power, for the communication of pardoning, assisting, transforming grace, for victory over unbelief, and for a happy immortality. The result of such persisting earnestness is *infallible*.

I trust my dear friend's mind is too well fortified to be pained by my having so unequivocally referred to the too probable issue of her present illness. You know, Sarah, how happy all your friends would be if the presages might prove to be mistaken; but at the same time, I cannot doubt, you are aware how strong those presages are deemed to be. You will calmly and piously prepare for what men call *the worst*,—but what to you, if such should be the event, will, I hope and trust, be infinitely *the best*. Believe me to be, my dear young friend, with the most cordial regard, yours,

J. FOSTER.

---

## II.

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIEND,—The kind and candid spirit in which I am assured that you received a former expression of interest in your present situation and prospects, would be enough to give me confidence that any renewed suggestions to you of the same serious tendency will



not be unwelcome. But independently of this, I could well trust to the vigorous character of your mind, and to the habits acquired by its having often been directed to grave and high subjects in the season of health, for assurance of not being regarded by you as a too officious friend and monitor. Your mind, Miss Sarah, has been no stranger to thoughts of the higher order; and the conviction of your judgment could not, for years past, have left it possible to admit even a transient imagination that it would be a happiness to be able to turn from them and forget them. You are not therefore now, by the departure of health, and the receding of life, forced with a mortal reluctance on a scene of thought fearfully foreign, desolate, and uncongenial with all that you had willingly given your attention to before. Be thankful for every previous monition, every conviction, and emotion of conscience, by which you are the better prepared for that deeper seriousness of thought required by your present situation. And do not repine, do not account it a hard appointment, that, while so many, of your youthful age, are at this hour sprightly and volatile, and intent alone on the vanities of sublunary pleasure and hope, *you* are summoned to give your mind to an employment of the gravest importance. You, Miss Sarah, appear to be now approaching the moment from which you are certain to be occupied with great subjects and emotions for ever, and you will feel the wisdom and necessity of employing much of the perhaps very limited previous space of time in such an exercise of thought as may conduce to prepare you, through the divine assistance, for entering happily on that never-ending train. And allow me, my dear friend, to suggest to you, that, if you shall suffer, as may be expected, a progressive debility of your frame, the mind will too probably sympathize with it, and become less able to sustain the effort of fixed and prolonged thought. It will, therefore, be happy if you *now* leave nothing undone that you may *then* be unable to do. You are not surprised at this explicitness in anticipating the result of your illness, being, I believe, aware that all the fond hopes of your friends are surrendered;—but surrendered to the disposing will of unerring wisdom and goodness. But yet, how difficult it is for them to realize in prospect the affecting fact! Last evening I had a strange feeling of mysteriousness and wonder, which seemed to say, “*Can it be, that the being who is now sensibly here, the present living object of so much interest, conversing with us, and listening to us, will, actually, a little while hence, be withdrawn from the intercourse of mortal society, and from the world; and have entered into a community of another order, and be in the very midst of those realities which can be unveiled to no inhabitant of the earth? Can there be so vast a change? and can she not be delayed and detained by her friends, to await that change at some period many years distant? But if she cannot, it is because her heavenly Father requires her presence elsewhere, and calls her away. And surely it is because he wills that she shall not be exposed to the sorrows and the sinful influences of an evil world,—and because the Redeemer of her soul has already prepared for her a happier abode.*”

The assurance of this, my dear friend, will be an animating consolation to your friends when, if such prove to be the divine destination, you shall have left them,—left them but for a while, for it will be their pleasing hope to see you again;—and all of us, if it is our appointment to stay here a little longer than you, shall feel one persuasive and attractive inducement more, from your removal to the invisible world, to carry our contemplations to that scene. I hope, Sarah, it is not needful to repeat the admonition to you, in terms of strong enforcement, that the time is most precious. It would indeed be so, though there were the probability that years of it were yet to come and be expended; but how emphatically important the passing days and hours become when they are apparently approaching the latest allotment of time; when the omens are, that there will be but a short interval before your adieu to this world; before you will cease to be within the sphere of this earth, and these skies; before you will have passed beyond the region and the time for the exercise of prayer, contrition, and faith; and before you will feel the mightiest evidence that you are actually in an economy new and inexpressibly solemn. The relations of that sublime economy are closely laying hold upon you; and it is the dictate of the soberest reason to be solicitous to be conformed and adapted to them, so as to be prepared to enter into its reality without danger and fear. And think in what manner the employment of the concluding portion of life and time will be looked back upon when the spirit has entered there!—of what value, of what importance, the earnest continued supplications of the divine mercy will then be felt to have been! What joy it will then be to have given all diligence to *this*!—to feel that the great concluding labor of life was effectually done!

With regard to what it is that constitutes a right preparation for going into the presence of God, there need no minute theological discriminations. To be reconciled to him, to be at peace with him, to enjoy his forgiveness and love,—*that* is the condition for appearing before him, and abiding in his presence for ever. The fatal thing to be removed and destroyed that *we may* be at peace with him, is sin. It is because our nature is depraved that we are not in affectionate harmony with him; and it is because we are guilty that we dread him. And that which renders him an object of dread, is what causes also the dread of death; “the sting of death is sin.” The conscience of a being who is solicitous to be prepared for death, and delivered from its fear, has to take solemn account of sin, not merely, not chiefly, as a certain measure of direct practical transgression, but in a far deeper, wider character. There may have been but little, comparatively, of this more palpable form of guilt in the life of a young person of virtuous habits and favorable situation.

The grand evil, my dear friend, is the *deficiency* of the heart towards God and spiritual and eternal interests. It is the not being animated with his love, not gratefully and habitually regarding him as the source of all good, not acknowledging him as supreme goodness itself, not

thinking and acting constantly with the express purpose of pleasing him, not desiring a communion with him, not earnestly aspiring to his presence as the greatest and the final felicity; in short, "loving the creature more than the Creator." Add to this, the not feeling a restless, unappeasable *impatience* of such a perverted, unhappy state of the heart, and an indifference to the grand expedient of the divine appointment and mercy for the redemption of the soul from this state of evil and from its consequences, by Jesus Christ. This, all this, is the fatal malady of our nature, of which practical sins are but the extreme indications and results, and which may exist in sad prevalence within, though those external iniquities be but few and slight, according to the ordinary standard of the world's morality. It is *here* that we need pardoning mercy to remove the guilt, and the operations of the Divine Spirit to transform our nature and reverse its tendencies. It is thus alone that we can be made fit for the communion and felicity of heaven. And these all-important pre-requisites are promised and imparted through our Mediator and his great sacrifice. How important that we have a profound and affecting conviction that these blessings are the all in all for us, for here and hereafter; and that we "look to Jesus," as the sacred medium of their communication, with the grateful affection, and confiding faith, claimed by him who has offered himself as an atonement for our sins, and opened for us an entrance into the eternal paradise. With these convictions of guilt powerfully impressed, and this view of the Mediator, by which all our guilt can be removed from the soul, and dis severed from its destiny in the life to come, we shall approach both earnestly and "boldly, to the throne of grace, to obtain mercy, and find grace to help in the time of need."

So may you feel, my dear friend; so may you importunately petition the almighty Power; and then you may look forward with complacency to the final hour, and with exultation to the prospect of all that is beyond it. You will perform the last great act of mortal existence as one who is ascending with dignity to a higher existence, in a state whither your pious friends will ere long follow to rejoin you. I will confidently assure myself of your friendly sentiment in receiving this one more slight testimony of an interest in what you are, and are going to be.

Methinks if I had been a person in the prime of life and health, I should have felt some reluctance to adopt such a train of admonition. It would have seemed as if I were saying,—"*I have long to live, and to see and enjoy all I could wish of this world, but you are soon to leave it.*" It might be, to apprehension, something like assuming a *vantage* ground. But a person in the decline of life, and a greater decline of health, is approaching much nearer to community of situation with one who is preparing to make the last surrender. And the thoughts which I suggest to you, my dear young friend, I feel the necessity of inculcating with all possible force on myself.

Believe me, most sincerely yours,

J. FOSTER.

## III.

· MY DEAR YOUNG FRIEND,—I will presume that one more short expression of friendly regard will not be unacceptable to you. While your friends feel they have no power to arrest and detain you, in that progress in which they see you still retiring, by a slow gradation, beyond their earthly circle, their affectionate interest will faithfully accompany you to the last, and will follow you when they cannot, for a while, convey to you the testimonies of it. I repeat, *for a while*; and the melancholy sentiment, which would otherwise sadden every communication with a friend in such circumstances as yours, is alleviated, is sometimes suspended, by the pleasing hope of attaining, after a while, a recovered presence and communication, in a state where there will be no impending event to threaten their loss. You have been very much favored, in the gentle and protracted manner in which you have been thus far conducted toward the point where a new scene is to open before you, and to receive you, and which has already received so many who have “sought a better country.” Several months since, your friends were warned that they were not to expect to retain you so long. The absence of the pain, and, in a considerable degree, of the distressing restlessness which in many instances attend the complaint, has saved the vital principle from being harassed and rapidly exhausted. This privilege, of prolonged time and exemption from severe suffering, has been a valuable indulgence to you from the Author and Disposer of life. And I feel assured that you estimate it aright, and are availing yourself of it to the most important account. You have had a great, a very great and difficult object to accomplish. For a person in the vernal animation, vigor, and prospects of youth (prospects in your case unusually flattering), to come deliberately to the decided position of being willing to surrender life, is indeed an arduous achievement. A generous sympathy is excited at seeing a young person making this noble struggle, and succeeding; a sympathy of that kind which we feel in beholding the faculties and virtues of some estimable being brought to the trial of a new and formidable crisis. You, Sarah, have been brought to this hard conflict of the soul; and it is a most grateful pleasure to be able to congratulate you, as I am assured I may with truth, on having overcome. It is a high attainment, eminently worth all it has cost you; all the sickness, the solicitude, the serious thought, the prayer, by which you have been exercised and trained to it. If you revert to some preceding period, say but a year since, and make the supposition that you could then have been warned by some infallible prescience, that you would at this time be as near as you now deem yourself to be to the conclusion of life, you probably can feel that, notwithstanding your having been previously no stranger to serious consideration, you would have felt you had before you a fearful difficulty, in the attainment of a resignation to so early a removal. You would have looked on this difficulty with a degree of dismay; like a traveller

arrived in front of a vast and steep mountain, which he must pass over, and which he views with an apprehensive and anxious question within himself, *how it can possibly be surmounted*. Think, then, what gratitude you owe to that good Spirit that has enabled you to overcome the natural horror of the great change, to resign yourself to the divine appointment with a full persuasion that it is a wise and gracious one, and to look with fortitude at the apparently near approach of the event. Do you not think, that this is an incomparably greater attainment than any, or all, of your past life? Would you—if it were possible such a thing might be placed at your choice—would you, Sarah, deliberately choose to be carried back to the state of health and promising appearance for long life, *but with the loss of what you have gained since your illness*—the loss of this resigned willingness to part with life? If you would *not*, you feel that you have gained something *better* than health and life. Yet even this grand advantage itself is but a small possession in comparison with what, I trust, you are next to gain.

Your judgment will have been seriously exerted to verify the genuineness of the principle of your acquiescence in the divine will, and of your deliverance from the dread of dissolution. You have understood Christianity too well to have been, at any moment, capable of being content with anything of the nature of a mere Stoical submission and resolution *to meet what is inevitable*. In reading the speculations, and some recorded examples, of this temper of mind, one has felt to be looking on a spectacle hardly less melancholy to behold than an utter thoughtlessness of death on the one hand, or an unsubdued, insuperable horror of it on the other. For our attaining such fortitude or consolation (if it can be so named), there was no need for the Son of God to come to deliver from the fear of death, by dying a sacrifice for our sins, and “bringing life and immortality to light.” The true victory over the fear of death consisting in a good hope of immortal happiness beyond it, is that in which the soul is fortified, not by a cold and desperate firmness to sustain, because we cannot help it, a grievous loss, but by the contemplation of an infinite gain. And according to the word of divine truth, mightily seconded by the inward consciousness of every humble and contrite spirit, that hope can find no solid ground to rest upon but the efficacy of the sufferings and intercession of Christ. And we really and effectually place our hope on this ground, when, with a firm belief in the perfect efficacy of the work of Christ, we are enabled also to direct our affections to him as having accomplished it, and to desire and pray earnestly to be interested in it, so as to appropriate its efficacy, to rely upon it, and plead it before the throne of the Divine Justice, renouncing from the heart every other dependence. This sincere and earnest desire, this strife and application of the soul directed to the great Source of mercy, this pertinacious going forth of the spirit to God as granting pardon and justification through Jesus Christ: this is the essential thing. A state of mind truly and prevailingly such as this, has the divine promise of *safety* to the supreme

interest, though it may not always banish every trembling apprehension. There may be granted to this state a more entire, or a less absolutely complete, sense of *assurance*; but generally it will result in such satisfactory hope, as will predominate on the whole over the fear of death. May this happiness be yours, my dear young friend, in advancing degrees and full confirmation!

When the soul looks from this high evangelic ground of confidence in the divine mercy, on the near approach of death, how changed is the appearance of that formidable power from the aspect which it is wont to present to our timorous nature! It now no longer appears in the almost exclusive light of a *doom*, as the execution of an awful sentence, as a rending of our vital connections with our present state of being. True, it is all this; but it is also something infinitely different and better. It is now beheld as a mode of transition to a higher state of existence,—a painful mode, indeed, and of alarming character, from the vastness and the unknown nature of the expected change; but perfectly safe, because the Almighty Friend will be *nigh* to answer to the call, “Into thy hand I commit my spirit,” and to support his feeble servant in the last conjuncture in which that servant can suffer or be intimidated. It is regarded, too, as a change absolutely indispensable in order to the attainment of that to which every pious and enlightened spirit aspires; inasmuch as *without* some such mighty change, it is impossible for the spiritual nature to be set free from the mean, corruptible, mortal elements with which it is mingled, and above all, from sin. It is plainly seen, that the soul *must* go into another state of existence, in order to the attainment of an eternal innocence and sanctity, to the attainment of that restoration to the divine likeness which will bring the soul into affectionate communion with the Father of spirits. How obvious is it, too, that there must be a change, like that accomplished through death, in order to the enlargement of our faculties, to the extension of the sphere of their never-remitting, never-tiring exertion, to their enjoying a vivid perception of truth, in a continually expanding manifestation of it, and to their entering, sensibly and intimately, into happier and more exalted society than any that can exist on earth. Sometimes, while you are thinking of that world unseen which is now an object of your faith, but may soon be disclosed to you in its wondrous reality, it will occur to you, how many most interesting inquiries to which there is here no reply, will, to you, be changed into knowledge!—how many things will be displayed to your clear and delighted apprehension, which the most powerful intellect, while yet confined in the body, conjectures and inquires after in vain. What a mighty scene of knowledge and felicity there is, which it is necessary to die in order to enter into! Yes, to be fully, sublimely, unchangeably happy, it is necessary to die. For the soul to be redeemed to liberty and purity,—to rise from darkness to the great vision of truth,—to be resumed into the presence of its Divine Original,—to enter into the communion of the Mediator of the new testament and of the spirits of the just, it is necessary to die!

I hope that the prospect of arriving at that happiness will animate you, dear Sarah, through the remaining period during which your mortal friends shall be permitted to detain you among them; and that in approaching the dark confine which you have to pass, you will possess so effectual a superiority over the dread of it, imparted by the all-gracious Spirit, through working in you a still more and more confirmed faith in the Redeemer, that your gradual retiring from your friends may have far less of the mournful character of going to bid them adieu, than of the cheerful one of inviting them in their due time to follow you.

I remain, my dear young friend,

Yours, with the most friendly regard,

JOHN FOSTER.

## I V.

*December 31, 1824.*

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIEND,—One more of the great marked periods of our time is just closing upon us. To-morrow there will be interchanged an infinite number of expressions of felicitation and good wishes. The year will begin with a profusion of gaieties, convivialities, and amusements. And think how many hearts are full of lively anticipations of the wants of the year,—how many minds busy with the projects to be accomplished in it. Innumerable youthful ones, especially, are indulging and reciprocating delightful fancies of pleasures, adventures or attainments, which they are confident the coming year will lavish on them,—a year through which, and a very long train of subsequent ones, they make sure of their continuance in this world. Such vivacities, schemes, and hopes, are dilating the hearts and inspiring the companies, of multitudes of your co-evals. But you, dear Sarah, are left apart. No lively meeting expects *you* to be of the party. No projects for the year are formed with the calculation that *you* are to be a participator. Every indulged thought and scheme of social, terrestrial happiness leaves *you* out. You are regarded as bearing the signs of another destination—as a marked victim, from which all are to retire.

But, in the view of a contemplative mind, you become, from this very situation, invested with a far higher character. There seems to hover round you a certain strange and mysterious importance, as of a being belonging less to this world than to another and greater. And a friend like me, with a strong native disposition to pensive and even melancholy reflection, and now by the decline of life continually reminded of its termination, feels it a far more interesting employment to communicate thoughts to you, in your present situation, than to share the intercourse of the most cheerful society of persons in health.

Since the time when you became convinced that your life was approaching its conclusion, and since you have been enabled to yield a submission to the appointment, you must have felt yourself on a strangely

new ground of existence. Perhaps there are moments when you can hardly realize to yourself the fact that the case is so. Indeed, I cannot sometimes without difficulty do it myself, when I see you, or think of you, and recollect how lately you were in the utmost vigor of health. At the beginning of this year what an effort of thought it would have required but to imagine yourself in such a situation at the end of it. But, dear Sarah, how much more it surpasses your utmost power of thought to imagine the situation you shall be in by the time that the year now commencing shall have come to an end ! And how striking to think that it *will* be an *actual situation*, that you will know and feel what it is, and that you will be able to compare it with the conceptions previously endeavored to be formed of it ; though it will not be permitted you by the laws of that economy to convey an image of it to your surviving friends. But I trust in the divine mercy, dear Sarah, that it will be to you a state of such felicity as you will be sensible that no language which they can understand could adequately describe ; and then it will appear to you but a very little thing to have *died* to attain it. And then, how far will you be from all regret that your life on earth has been so short.

It is perfectly natural that some emotions of this regret should at times have arisen in your mind, since your illness assumed a decidedly fatal character. Without indulging a rebellious sentiment against Supreme Wisdom, you may have suffered many a deeply painful struggle between the fond attachment to life and your consciousness of the ominous indications that you were losing it. You may have pensively mused on your lot, and thought, *Why* so brief and rapid a passage through time ? *Why* smitten in the opening prime of life, when my faculties are but just reaching to maturity, when I have but just begun to make my experiment on the possibilities of good in this life, and when I felt an impulse and an energy that would have carried me into that experiment with such distinguished advantage ? *Why* appointed to encounter the dread *enemy* in my path at so early a stage, while I see such numbers around me going freely on in theirs ? *Why* just *show* me this world, to tell me that nothing in it is to be mine ?

My dear friend, it would have been contrary to the principles of our nature for you *not* to have felt some emotions of this kind ; you may have felt them at some moments with a bitter pang. The merciful Father above has great indulgence and compassion for a sentiment which he has himself planted in the heart, by the constitution which he has given it. And he does not require from his frail mortal child an acquiescence in his sovereign will without unfolding to her in prospect something which will be a compensation, and infinitely more than a compensation for what she is called to resign. He thus, as it were, sets aside his absolute right of sovereignty to appeal to your judgment and your gratitude, by exhibiting to you a grand advantage to be given you in the mortal exchange. This sublime object of hope, combined with a firm faith in his infinite wisdom and benignity, is the powerful principle



to suppress every murmur, and to reconcile you, and much more than merely reconcile you, to pass, at his call, from the scene of life and youth through the gloom of death—the *transient* gloom, dear Sarah—for how quickly when you arrive at it will you pass through it, and beyond it!

Besides these higher considerations, you will sometimes recur to that (which has been adverted to before) of the true estimate of this life and this world. You can *now* make that estimate under a clearer light than at the beginning of the year that has now closed. But did you really ever, with a confidence that lasted any considerable time, represent to yourself a life of very high and nearly continuous felicity, as possible in this world? Have you ever *seen an instance* which excited your envy in a very high degree—an actual condition the exact parallel to which you thought would satisfy your wishes? Or, if you have seen such a model displayed in *fiction*, did you fail to perceive some *great fallacy* in the representation, when you considered for a moment *how* it could be realized in actual life? Did you *ever*, for an hour, for a minute, seriously fancy you could perhaps select and bring together, at your will, all, or a very preponderating majority of, the materials and elements of temporal happiness, and combine them into an *actual* state in which you could feel an entire complacency; thus constructing for yourself a state of life (a state to be *real*) by an assemblage of what seemed to you the very best part of one person's lot, and of another's, and another's? Could you overlook even the circumstance, that persons of your sex have, as peculiar to it, many things against them for the happiness of life? In short, did you ever, either at once or by successive additions to the imaginary model, sketch for yourself a condition of life, and then deliberately say—"This would be to be deeply, amply, satisfactorily happy; and this shall assuredly be realized in *my* advancing life?" No, Sarah; I do believe that your youthful imagination never did, for more than a passing moment, flatter you to this degree of beguilement. I am persuaded, too, that in the recent period of your life you could not have ventured, and would have been checked by your conscience if you had attempted, to imagine any scheme of happiness as satisfactory, in which *religion* should not have been an essential part. But *that* changes the whole theory of happiness in this life; when you admitted *that* into your scheme, you admitted that all temporal felicity is most imperfect and precarious, and treacherous too; you admitted that this life, this world itself, "is not our rest," is not the scene for a true and elevated happiness, and that whenever the will of God shall be so, it is even better to die than to live. When, therefore, you look on life, with all its possible temporal felicities, as denied you, you will calmly estimate what it is only that you have surrendered.

But, my dear friend, I trust that such reflections on the vanity of mortal life, on the utter unsatisfactoriness of all sublunary good, even supposing it to have been fully *ATTAINABLE* by you had your life been prolonged, are now become almost superfluous to you; for I am happy

to believe that you have been enabled, in the prevailing state of your feeling, to make the surrender of your life, and of all that might have seemed possible to be attained and enjoyed in its prolongation, to the decree of your merciful Father ; that you can say, with cordial acquiescence, " Thy will be done," while you see the world which so lately extended its prospects before you, now all retiring behind you. Not that you can with *invariable* indifference look back on what is departing ; there will be moments when your spirit will " cast a lingering look behind ;" when you will have cause to wish you could make a more entire transfer of the warm interest of the heart from the life that you are leaving to which you are approaching. But I trust that you will be favored with such divine assistance that the *habu* of your mind shall be that of looking resignedly back, and with intentness and earnest devotional solicitude to that which is before you. There may at some moments arise in your mind a certain strange wondering and dubious emotion, which almost questions the reality of your situation, that almost prompts you to say, " *Can it be, is it a real truth, that I shall soon be no longer here—that a few weeks hence I shall actually not be conversing with these friends, not inhabiting these apartments, not reading these books, not looking out upon this scene of nature and human existence, not praying in the body to the Father of my spirit ? Is it a reality, and no dream, that even now a commissioned angel is waiting his great Master's signal to come to this very apartment where I think, or where I slumber ?*"

But the solemn fact still returns upon your consciousness with unequivocal, unchanging evidence. You feel the entire conviction still abiding that it is even so, that you *will* soon have left these friends, these apartments, these occupations, this body ; and that the eyes of your spirit *will* open on the messenger from heaven. How affecting to your friends, dear Sarah, in an hour that is to arrive, to find that, unseen to them, he has come, and that their young friend is gone. But how happy for them to have good cause to believe that your departing spirit rose up in sacred transport to accompany him ! And while they cherish you in affectionate remembrance as long as they stay on earth, how often will they indulge a profound, contemplative wonder what the nature of that state may be to which they will rejoice to assure themselves that you have ascended, through your interest in the great Sacrifice—through the merits of Him who died that penitent believing sinners might live, and live for ever. Think, my dear friend, of *Him* as dying, and having, by devoting himself to die, conquered death, divested it of its terrors, consecrated and dignified it, and transformed it into a friend. Think of his having enabled you to call death itself your friend, that will do for you one grand act to emancipate you from all frailty and mortality, and sorrow and sin. Pray earnestly for an assured interest in that death which has so divinely transformed our otherwise dark and gloomy destiny. You cannot feel gratitude enough to the divine Benefactor for the

inestimable advantage which your affliction, and the solemn anticipations on which it has fixed your mind, have been made the means of imparting to you, in revealing to you how much you have needed of enlightening and sanctifying grace. It is well that your conscience has been caused to speak to you in a sterner language, that you have been compelled to become sensible of corruption in the soul, that its pride has been shown to you in its true character, and that you are made to deplore that impatience which would complain even against God. This is a painful and mortifying manifestation to you, dear Sarah; but oh, it is most salutary and most indispensable. Do not turn from this self-abasing view. You feel you have a most direct interest in being aware of all that there is in a mind which is expecting and preparing to appear shortly in the divine presence; in being aware, especially, of all that requires to be at once changed and pardoned in order to an accepted and happy appearance there. Every deeper insight into our nature is sure to detect still more and more of what ought to extinguish its pride, and excite the most fervent petitions for the operation of that almighty power which alone can renew this depraved nature, and for an interest in the merits of Him who "had no sin." A young person, with a conscience in a great measure free from the charge of the external practical kinds of sin, is extremely unapt to admit the conviction of a deep, sad, intrinsic corruption in the soul. And I have no doubt, my dear friend, that it has been for the very purpose of aggravating your sense and conviction of this fact, that you have been made to experience a *delay* of that full consolation, and that imparted spiritual strength, for which you have petitioned the divine mercy. You acknowledge that this actually *has* made you more sensible of pride, impatience, and the mighty difficulty of submission and self-denial. Is it not well that this internal evil has been thus disclosed to your knowledge and conscience? Be thankful, dear Sarah, for this discipline of humiliation. And persevere to pray for both the pardon and the conquest of all sin, as a preparation for a world of purity and endless felicity; and while you do so, the whole truth of God is pledged to you that you will have the joy of final success. My ever dear young friend, in time and eternity, I remain yours with best regards and wishes,

J. FOSTER.

---

V.

*Monday, January 10, 1825.*

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIEND,—In seeing you last evening I could not help perceiving more evidently than in any former instance the painful oppression of your illness, though I was not entirely aware till afterwards how greatly it has been aggravated within the preceding week. After so considerable a space of time during which it had not appeared very decidedly progressive, this too visible change comes painfully on

your friends with an impression as of something new. Though they had habitually looked forward to one inevitable event, it had seemed possible that you might remain yet many days within reach of their affectionate attention. This I had myself been willing to anticipate when I wrote to you on the last day of the departed year. I hoped I might yet see you a considerable number of times more, though yet well aware that *any* time might prove the last. But now, dear Sarah, it does appear that the period appointed to you by Him, in whose merciful hands you are, is very near its termination. You can believe with what deep regret this conviction is admitted; but I hope that such regret is what *you* feel far less than any of your friends; and I confidently trust in the divine mercy that you have no cause to feel it. In this acceleration of the malady that preys on your life we regard you as happier than any of us, and happier than you have ever been yet, in being so near to a happiness that no pain or grief can ever invade. How soon our dear friend may be at the very "fountain of life," in possession of a joy which, if it could be but even in part revealed to those who survive, they would be impatient to pass through death to share with her! And they will humbly hope in the same all-sufficient merits that she relies upon, that at length they shall arrive to share it with her.

May the divine assistance be largely granted to you, dear Sarah, in this your time of most urgent need, to enable you to look forward to the approaching hour with a strong and overcoming faith—a faith that most simply and entirely relies on the complete atonement and the perfect righteousness of the Mediator. Implore the heavenly Father, as one of his children that has not many more prayers to address to him from this dark region of sin, and sorrow, and death, that he may enable you to go, as it were, out of himself, and repose your soul, with all its interests and hopes, on that perfect work of our Lord and Saviour. It is a complete salvation for you to rely upon, independent of any virtues, and in triumph over conscious and lamented sins in your own nature. It is expressly as being unable to attain virtues and graces to satisfy the divine law and an enlightened conscience,—exactly as being conscious of defect and sin which you condemn and deplore,—it is in this very character and condition that you are to embrace the salvation accomplished through the sufferings of the Redeemer. And it comes to you in a divine fulness which pardons all sin, and needs no virtues of your own for your acceptance before the righteous Judge. It sets aside at once all that you can attain, and all that you condemn, in yourself and of your own, and gives you a blessed acquittance on another ground. It makes no stipulation or previous condition for some certain established degrees of one virtuous principle or another in your soul. It tells you that all the degrees of all the virtues are equally incompetent and foreign to the great purpose, and invites and conjures you to cast yourself wholly on the all-sufficiency of Him in whom all fulness of merit and righteousness dwells. It avowedly takes you as defective and sinful, notwith-

standing all that you labor and strive, and says, "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away sin." How constantly, through the New Testament, is it represented that this committing of the soul to the merciful and exalted Saviour, *just as it is*, with all its conscious weakness, incapacity, and self-condemnation, is the grand point of safety and immortal hope, is the escape from the oppression of guilt and the fear of death. Oh then, dear Sarah, do not exhaust your spirit, and afflict your heart, to attain, as it were, a self-commanded state of the mind, a subjugation of all its wrong tendencies and emotions to its own absolute authority, *as a pre-requisite to the enjoyment of a sense of the divine mercy and acceptance*. I shall not be mistaken in this representation. It is most necessary and salutary to have a deep conviction of the evils of the heart, to look at them, lament them, and strive against them. But then, it were utter injustice to the design of the divine mercy in Jesus Christ for the applicant to that mercy to feel as if bound down to the melancholy task, the desperate labor, of acquiring a conquest over those evils *as a thing requisite* IN ORDER to be qualified to appropriate that mercy, and all its blessed consolations. Oh no, my ever dear friend, come to that mercy first, and last,—always. Come to the divine Saviour *as* the subject of those evils, and seeking the pardon of them through his blood. They are the *very reason* for coming instantly and continually to him who died that the humble suppliant might obtain forgiveness of them, and the almighty operation of his grace to subdue them, as far as in this mortal state they may be subdued. Implore every hour, as the *primary* thing—as the *supreme* thing, that you may confide yourself wholly to the Saviour of the world, and then all the internal evils that you condemn and deplore will, *as GUILT*, be totally and for ever detached from your soul, and, as *harassing enemies*, will be partly repressed before your final deliverance, and will be triumphantly escaped from in the mortal hour. And, my dear Sarah, will not that be a deliverance worth dying for? When you shall have overcome, and shall be among those that "have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb," and shall "be without fault before the throne of God," shall you wish yourself back again in this mortal, sinful world?

There is one thing in which, upon the representation of your estimable relatives, I believe you really distress yourself greatly too much; I mean the *irritability* which you complain of often feeling to a painful excess. You really must, my dear friend, be persuaded to believe that this is owing, in a very great degree, to the physical effect of your disorder—an effect which probably *no* person would escape in similar circumstances, and for which your merciful Father will have the most compassionate indulgence.

I wish extremely, dear Sarah, that in a communication so near the conclusion of our intercourse on earth, I could have found language to express to you the Christian consolations with more vivid and vital force and emphasis. But I pray, and do you, Sarah, continue to pray, that

your divine and almighty Friend may be your instructor and consoler—he who is the Father of spirits and the God of all consolation.

If you would indulge me in a momentary reference to myself, I would say, that the endeavor, during your illness, to impart some instructive and consolatory suggestions to a young friend whom I have regarded with peculiar partiality from almost her childhood, has been one of the very most interesting employments of any in my whole life. And to the last day of it (which I now never think of as very remote), it will be a deeply cherished pleasure to hope I may have rendered you some real service in your most important interests, that, under the Divine blessing, I may have contributed some sensible aid to your looking with resignation and complacency on the mysterious, but most undoubtedly wise and beneficent, appointment which removes you so early from life; beneficent it is, my dear Sarah, when it transfers you with but a moment's interval to a better. Your mortal friend will cherish the thought of not being lost to your memory even when you shall have ascended to that nobler life. But I would hope that a little prolongation yet of your presence among us will permit the pleasure of seeing you some times more. My ever dear young friend, in time and eternity, may the Almighty bring us who are losing you, happily to meet you again, never more to lose your society.

J. FOSTER.

---

## VI.

*Saturday, January 15th.*

THE last letter, my dear friend, was concluded under a pensive apprehension that I might write no more lines to be read by you; it being written under the strong impression of the description given me, by your affectionate relatives, of the fast increasing pressure of your disease; and of the severe crisis which you had suffered and with difficulty survived, from the attempt to take one more view of the face of nature, before you should be conveyed to behold a fairer aspect of existence elsewhere; before you should open the eyes that will never close upon the scenes of paradise.

But as yet, and perhaps for a little while longer, you are retained within the relations of friendship on earth. They who have felt the value and attraction of the spirit that is preparing to leave them, will regard every protraction of your continuance here as a most welcome indulgence granted to *them*. But to *you*, my dear Sarah, it will be a suffering period. It is painful to think that you must experience a progressive exhaustion of the strength already so reduced, that you will feel often an oppressive languor and restlessness from which there is no escape, that disordered nature will again and again struggle in the effort for life and breath, and that the power to command and fix your

thoughts will often be suspended. But, reflect what it would be to suffer all this unalleviated by the consolations of piety, with no sweet radiance beaming on the soul from a better world, with no sense of the presence and benignity of an almighty Friend, and with an insuppressible eagerness to retain hold of departing life, in an alternation between transient delusive hopes of recovery, and returning despondency. Such an instance occurred a year or two since, in this neighborhood, in the case of a young person who was sinking under the same disease; and her religious friends thought they had never witnessed so sad a spectacle.

It is, on the contrary, one of the most delightful illustrations of the preciousness and power of the Christian faith, that it can enable a young person, arrested in the full flush and animation of opening life by a fatal malady, to resign that life calmly to the will of the all-wise and gracious Disposer,—to say with devout and grateful acquiescence, “Thy will be done,”—to commend the soul to Him who died for us and rose again, and ever lives to intercede for us,—and to look beyond this world to the region of the true, and blessed, and expansive, and never-dying existence. Heaven grant you, in a happy measure, dear Sarah, these elevating sentiments, growing stronger as your mortal frame grows weaker. May your heart feel this living power from the Eternal source of life—these principles of the soul’s true vitality, the precursors of the new and immortal life—to soothe and animate you through the remaining short period of your abode in a state of sickness and death. But still it must be a period of suffering for you, my ever dear friend. And it is you, you yourself, that bear the oppressive weight. Friends sympathize; but are often reminded how far their sympathy is from an actual identity with the feelings of the sufferer. She bears *alone* the languor, and pain, and agitation of the falling tabernacle. I was most forcibly and pensively struck with this thought in seeing you last Tuesday, and still more deeply in reflection afterwards. I cannot express how affectingly the idea dwelt on my mind, “How *solitary* a thing is the fatal process!”

The friends who are habitually near her, or who see her at considerable intervals, are deeply interested in the suffering of their young friend, but they are not as she is,—they cannot place themselves in *perfect* community, cannot take a *real* share in that which presses on her,—cannot remove any part of it from her. It is her own individual self, still, that feels the sinking of nature, that breathes with labor, that is forced to painful efforts, by day and night, to relieve the vital organs. And it is in her own sole person that she is approaching to the last act of life.

I have no doubt you will sometimes have had this consciousness of the solitariness, the incommunicableness, of your condition, distinctly sensible in your mind; the reflection that, whatever the persons attached to you may feel, and whatever they may do and express in kind endeavors of assistance, it is still you yourself that feel the grasp of the fatal power, from which no hand can withdraw you, and that you can hold, or be held by, no mortal hand in the act of stepping off, at last, from the world. In

the silence of your thoughts you have said, "*They* regard my situation with an affectionate interest, but it is still *I* alone that am in the situation; it is *I* that am sinking in the painful struggle."

But, dearest Sarah, what then? There is one all-vital relation, in which this secluded individuality and loneliness of your being and condition is absorbed and lost. The almighty and most benignant Being encompasses you, is in perfect communication with your spirit, and all that your existence contains; he pervades your mortal and your immortal nature; maintains an inconceivably intimate intervention in it, an entire perception, and entire regulation of all that can affect it. He involves and cherishes you in his paternal love and power. It is in him that you live and move, that you breathe, or yield up your breath. It is in Him that you die—to live for ever. He is not a friend that, while near you, and affectionately intent on your situation, yet stands separate from you, as mortal friends must by an insuperable necessity of nature; but *essentially* dwells in your heart and soul, and in your body too, so long as he pleases to retain it the abode of your spirit. And when he shall dissolve that connection, his love will not abandon even the mortal part of his child, but will watch over it till the appointed hour, when he will recall it from the dust, in new life and never-fading glory. You are not, then, a desolate and detached being, dissociated and alone, though mortal friends cannot be in perfect community with your condition, cannot sicken in your sickness, and expire in your dissolution. They too will, at a period which every day brings nearer, have each their own separate experience of the last conflict, and will hope to enjoy then that sense of the presence and communion of Him who is their life, which will preclude all feeling of solitariness and desolation. And in thinking of you, Sarah, at such a period, it will perhaps be more pleasing that you are gone before, and that they shall soon meet you, than it would have been to have left you behind, to follow at some unknown distance of time.

This complacency, this predominance of sweet confidence and hope, accompanying the sense of so sublime and awful a reality as that of being surrounded and pervaded by the Divine presence, in life and death, is derived to sinful beings solely through the mediation of Him who came on earth to bear our mortal nature, our infirmities, our sorrows, and our sins; and offered up his life to reconcile us to God, whose offended justice was to be propitiated, that his mercy and love might flow into our otherwise unhappy and lost spirits. It is because our Great High Priest has made this one offering, "sufficient and alone," and has passed into the heavens to secure our immortal interests there, that we can have confidence in the favor of the Almighty Power, that we can come boldly to the throne of grace, as his children, pardoned, accepted, and smiled upon; and that, in our final hour, we can gratefully exult to feel that he is most intimately with us, that it is with him and in him, at his sovereign will and by his conducting and ever-protecting care, that we pass to a new, and as yet unrevealed state of existence. Let then, my dear Sarah, the



special emphasis of your petitions to the throne of Heaven be directed to the point, that you may have a lively, affecting, and grateful apprehension of the mercy of God as manifested through Jesus Christ, and be enabled to take to yourself more and more an interest in that mercy. Pray that all which your conscience feels as guilt you may be empowered to throw off from your soul upon the perfect merit and propitiation, there to be annihilated. It is an annihilation of guilt, that is, the condemnation and the exposure to penal consequences are reversed and forever done away, when all conscious sin is at once regretted, opposed, and with an humble, confiding effort of the soul transferred to that vast account of human guilt which our Lord sustained and bore away in his death. That which he bore away, you, my dear Sarah, do not bear, as a condemning charge. You can plead to the Divine Justice this great sacrifice for sin; you can plead it *now*; and will, I firmly trust, plead it with joyful success when you shall appear more immediately before the righteous judge.

This doctrine of our deliverance from condemnation, here and hereafter, appears the most conspicuous character of the Christian Revelation. "The Son of man came to give his life a ransom for many." "God has commended his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." "He hath loved us, and given himself for us." "There is one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all." "By his own blood he entered into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." "The blood of Christ, who, through the Eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, shall purge your conscience." "His own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, by whose stripes we are healed." "He once suffered for our sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." "He hath loved us, and sent his Son to be a propitiation for our sins." "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ; even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of him, and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified." "Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus." "By Christ all who believe are justified from all things." "He is the end of the law for righteousness to every one who believeth; in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins." "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." There are numberless expressions to the same effect, and the general tenor of the New Testament is of the same character. There are persons who revolt at such a view of the foundation of all our hopes, and would say, "Why might not the Almighty, of his *mere immediate benevolence*, pardon the offences of his frail creatures when they repent, without any such intermediation and vicarious suffering?" It is enough to answer, that Supreme Wisdom was the

sole competent judge, in the universe, of what was the plan most worthy of holiness and goodness; and that, unless the New Testament be the most deceptive book *that ever was written*, the plan actually appointed is that of a suffering mediator. If we *could not* apprehend the propriety of such an appointment for the exercise of mercy, that would be no valid objection. But, for myself, I never feel any difficulty in conceiving that, while the Divine mercy would save guilty beings from deserved punishment, *it should yet be absolutely necessary to the honor of eternal justice that an awful infliction should fall somewhere*; and that if a Being from heaven, divinely generous and beneficent, would offer *himself* to bear this infliction in place of the guilty, it would be the most worthy and illustrious expedient possible for even Infinite Wisdom to adopt.

I will conclude, my dear Sarah, with one consolatory suggestion. You may at some moment have felt a sentiment of regret that the shortness of the term assigned you in this life has denied you space for rendering an active and prolonged service to God. To repress the pain of such an emotion, consider, that the greater life will be an endless course of *activity*, and that that activity will be *all service to God*, and service in the most high and excellent nature and degree. In the figurative, emblematical representation of heaven, in the last chapter of the Bible, it is said, and assuredly *without* a figure, "His servants shall serve him." You have an infinite series of service to perform for him there, to enter on which you may be more than content to quit this lower, narrower field of action. Once again, my dear Sarah, I commend you to the Almighty Father and Benefactor. How much of his assistance will you need to support your patience and fortitude under the increasing weakness and weariness of ebbing life! May he impart to you the animating sense of his favor, and the still brightening hope of a happier world. May you enter, at length, into the fulness of his joy. And may I one day meet you there. I would repeat the words of a great poet, in a valedictory address to his friend:—

" May'st thou shine when the sun is quenched;  
May'st thou live and triumph when time expires."

My dear young friend, in time and throughout eternity, I repeat once more, may the blessing of Heaven rest on you. J. FOSTER.

---

## VII.

*Thursday, January 27.*

It is extremely pleasing, my dear friend, to see your period of appointed discipline so much prolonged, and to think of you as still the hearer or the reader of the expressions of friendship. If I would once again repeat such expressions to you, it is rather as a continued gratification of that interest with which I have done it so often before, than

from feeling myself able to communicate anything very sensibly varied, or more appropriate to the situation in which you stand, looking forward upon so grand and solemn a prospect.

The conversation of last week has returned on my thoughts numberless times. I was gratified more than I can express by the friendly confidence shown in speaking so unreservedly of yourself, and of some of the sentiments and solitudes which your mind revolves in its internal consciousness.—If you have habitually felt a difficulty of being communicative on such a subject, it is to me nothing strange in the least. The case was so with myself, in youth, and has always continued so; I mean, a strong, very strong, and invincible disinclination to bring into social converse, with even the most assured and faithful friend, the religious state of my own mind. The feeling always was,—“That concern is peculiarly and emphatically *my own*; I think of it much and deeply, feel its vast importance, but *cannot* make it a subject of free communication.”—There is the utmost difference of mental temperaments in this respect. Some persons seem to feel a restless prompting to disclose all their thoughts and emotions; and when they see a quite opposite disposition they are apt unjustly to interpret it as an unfavorable indication. Your mind, my dear Sarah, is probably of the order more inclined to keep the deeper reflections and emotions secluded within; and it is not a required effect or evidence of religion, that it should reverse this constitution of the mind. Only you will permit me to observe, that whenever you do, with perhaps a degree of effort against the retiring propensity of your feelings, give expression to any of the deeper sentiments in your mind, at occasional favorable moments, you impart the liveliest interest to your affectionate domestic friends. They watch with habitual solicitude for every intimation of that internal progress, the happy result of which is to be their best consolation when they shall see you among them no longer. They entertain a grateful assurance that all will be well, eternally well; but every expression, however brief, which confirms to them that this is also your own assurance, your own good hope, reposing on the divine mercy, is most welcome and valuable to them.

My ever dear young friend, you have attained one happy and enviable point of advancement. I was exceedingly struck with the calmness with which you deliberately said, “I would not wish to recover, even if that were possible.” If I was somewhat surprised to hear so young a person say, that this was not so much of an attainment, for that you had never been very ardently attached to life, I did not regard you as the less to be congratulated. It was well that there should have been, in your season of health, a slighter degree of the fascination to life than is felt by youth in general. But, my dear Sarah, it is an immensely different thing to be able to avow this detachment where life is actually and sensibly approaching its termination. It is a high and felicitous attainment beyond what that former indifference would have proved to be if it had been suddenly brought to trial. And what is that to which you are con-

scious that you owe so great, so enviable an attainment? Is it not that you are enabled to yield yourself resignedly to your Creator's will, with a full conviction that what he wills is the best? Is it not that you behold in the great Mediator an all-sufficiency for the pardon of all your guilt, for acceptance before God, and "deliverance from the wrath to come," and that you are solemnly desiring and praying, and with a sweet hope of entire success, to be enabled to commit your soul to him? Is it not that there is granted you the hope of a happier and eternal life when this mortal one shall be resigned,—a hope which breathes peace, though it do not glow with the delight and triumph which you could desire? Is it not, my dear friend, through the efficacy of *these* divine resources that you can maintain a decided willingness to surrender all on earth, and are waiting to hear the voice of Him who has the keys of death and the invisible world?" My dear Sarah, be thankful for even the imperfect and partial efficacy of these "powers of the world to come;" and pray in patient faith for a continual augmentation of their sacred influence. For there is no point of *necessary* limitation in the measure in which the efficacious power of Christianity may be experienced, both in its consolatory and animating operation, and in its corrective one. In the divine revelation there is no one character that you are more certain that you perceive than a *spirit of promise*—a continual and often emphatic repetition of assurance, that those who sincerely seek to obtain from God more of the best wisdom, of internal spiritual power, of the consolations of hope, shall obtain it. But, at the same time, He who has thus engaged to impart the most inestimable gifts that can be received under heaven, justly maintains his own sovereign discretion with respect to the gradation and the time in which they shall be communicated; with respect to the measure of disciplinary and painful exercise which his servants shall pass through in the progress of attaining them. And think, dear Sarah, how justly he may require an humble patience, a prolonged, persevering earnestness, when all the blessings to be granted are the gifts of sovereign mercy alone—when he has already given so much—and *when it is absolutely certain that he will*, in the *whole* of his dispensation, taken together, first and last, toward his persevering petitioner, impart all that is indispensable to final safety and victory.

You complain, my dear friend, of the imperfect degree, the slow progress, of the operation of the religious principle on your mind. But should you be surprised at this? Should you wonder that you have not been suddenly or rapidly placed in a state of full conquest over every internal evil, on a serene eminence above all painful strife and disquiet of conscience? Reflect what there was to be done for you, and in you. Consider what it was to be suddenly arrested in the prime of youth, with the world opening before you, and by its influences taking possession of your spirit, and operating to assimilate its affections. And perhaps the solemn truths and warnings of religion, though familiar to your knowledge, had a feebleness of power over your heart which you may now

sometimes reflect upon with regret, and not without wonder. In the very midst of this introduction to the world, and under the influence of its interests and prospects, there was suddenly laid on you an irresistible hand; all this combination of sublunary interests was dissolved from around you, and the vision of eternity arose to your view. Under so mighty a change of your situation, think, dear Sarah, whether there was not that to be accomplished in your mind which might well require a hard and protracted process. Should you wonder that it is *still* not completed, and still accompanied, in a degree, by difficulty and grievance? Can you wonder that there are still some tendencies very imperfectly subdued, some mortifying perceptions of a corrupt nature forced upon your consciousness, a faintness to be lamented in the best desires, a slowly progressive ascendancy of the Christian spirit? All this has been necessary for you to feel, dear Sarah, and some remainder of the same discipline may not yet be passed. But maintain patience, continue to apply to the power and mercy of the Almighty, in the name of our Lord, and all will ultimately be well. What a region that will be when there will be no more contest with sin, no more sickness, nor fear, nor sorrow.

Once more, my dear young friend, in time and through eternity, I invoke the Divine benediction on you.

J. FOSTER.

---

## VIII.

*February 4th, 1825.*

MY DEAR SARAH,—While your heavenly Father retains you here some lingering moments longer, to accomplish in you and for you the concluding part of his merciful intentions toward you on earth, I cannot be content without conveying to you one short expression more of that most deep and friendly interest which augments as we see you retiring. I wish to have it reposed and cherished in my memory, that so dear a friend may read yet a few more lines from me. And I should feel it an inestimable favor granted to me, if I might contribute, in even the least degree, under the blessing of him who keeps you in his faithful care, to cheer your spirit in this last stage of its journey and its conflict. All mortal endeavors to aid are felt, by those whose affection would offer them, to be inexpressibly feeble and inadequate to impart strength and animation to the soul in this season of its final and greatest trial. But the happiness to you, dearest Sarah, and the consolation to your friends, is, that *he* is with you who has all power and goodness to support you, who loves while he afflicts you, and will not desert you one moment, but hold you in his own mighty hand, and bear you safely through.

You are sensible, my ever dear friend, that the painful struggle of life will soon be over. At the end of each of the few past weeks you have been conscious, and your anxiously vigilant domestic friends have

plainly perceived, that a few days had effected still another, and another, depression of the force of the vital principle : languishing nature has surrendered, successively, still one point more. You are now touching the very confine between this world and that mysterious one into which your Almighty Father's voice is calling you, into which his angels will rejoice to bear you. Oh, how happy that you are not looking despondingly back, with grief and anguish, to see the world receding, and vainly striving to grasp something by which to retain hold of it ! How happy to feel, that the world you are leaving does not raise a distracting and melancholy conflict in your soul by drawing it back from that to which you are advancing. What a felicity, that you can complacently, and without a murmur, without, at least, anything more than a momentary and natural emotion, resign the world, and youth, and life, with all the sublunary activities of a vigorous and enlarging mind, and all that time appeared to be promising you ; and can give your immortal being up to Him who will translate it to a better and happier economy.

But still, my dear Sarah, you feel a disquietude of heart, from not experiencing the *complete* influence of religion in imparting a fulness of consolation, in animating the affections toward God and eternal realities, and raising you to a strong confidence of faith. You are, perhaps, sometimes tempted to doubt whether your prayers to the throne of heaven have been accepted. Now, it is right that you *should* regret a deficiency of the blessed influence, that you *should* implore that God would lift up upon you, without a cloud, the light of his countenance, and grant you, at happy intervals at least, to enjoy strong consolation in having fled to the refuge set before you,—*at intervals*, for a malady that so crushes the body will often, unless almost a miracle were wrought, inevitably cast a shade over the mind. A measure of this joy of faith and hope is truly a blessing to be desired and implored, both for your own support, my dear Sarah, and that you may leave a happy testimony for the consolation of your friends. You will please your heavenly Father by praying that he would make it delightfully evident that your prayers have been graciously heard. But, at the same time, do not deprive yourself of the precious consolation which belongs to you, and which is so exceedingly needful to you, by mistaking the true *principle* of the assurance of the efficacy of your prayers. The true ground of this assurance is the infallible *certainly* of the divine promises ; that is to say, the *certainly* of the faithfulness of God to perform them to those who truly seek him. Combine this certainty on the part of God, with the *conscious certainly* on your part, my dear friend, that you do sincerely, earnestly, and patiently, continue to entreat him to fulfil his own gracious words to you, and *this* forms a firm ground for your assurance, *independently of the degree in which he may or may not favor you with the express tokens that he actually does accept your petitions*. If only satisfied of this one thing, namely, that the soul has with real and persevering earnestness, and in the name of Christ, sought the divine mercy, and

implored the final fulfilment of the promises of God, I should feel an entire confidence of the eternal safety of such a spirit, however defective its actual consolations were, and even though it went on to the last hour with a great degree of painful doubt and apprehension. Desirable as it is,—exceedingly so, in your near approach to the mighty change,—to enjoy the most sensible and animating manifestation of the divine favor and acceptance in Jesus Christ, I would still repeat, most cogently, that this is not the *essential* ground for confidence. The *essential* ground still is, the absolute certainty that God will and does accept every one who sincerely seeks him, *whether he grant an animating testimony to the heart that he does so or not.*

And are you not *consciously certain*, that you have sought his mercy with a real and solemn intentness of soul, and that you do so still, and that you shall continue to do so to the last hour? My dearest Sarah, surely your heart bears you witness that this is true. His favor, his love, in life and death, and for ever, is that which you are never ceasing to desire and supplicate. You even desire and pray that you may desire and pray for it still more importunately. You *are* beseeching him to fulfil in you all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power, to conform you to his image, and to prepare you for his presence. Surely, my ever dear friend, you *can* say that this is the prevailing impulse of your soul; that it is so in those moments when the sufferings which oppress the body are at intervals so remitted as to allow the free action of your mind. Then, be assured, that you have the true and solid ground for confidence. Rest upon it, Sarah; in humble trust commit yourself to the divine mercy; still, however, not ceasing to pray that your God may impart to you a more animated degree of consolation, more clearly disclose his love, and more powerfully draw your affections toward him. Do not cease to pray for some such happy emotions, in the intervals of your suffering. But still consider, that one part, a difficult part, of your last duty, is devoutly to submit to bear that weariness and often confusion of mind which is the inevitable effect of the distress and sinking of your physical nature. May your almighty Friend sustain you and prolong your patience under this painful weight!

But, while I write, the thought rises upon me, like the appearance of a vision, how soon you will be past all those disquietudes and sufferings! A short while, and you will have emerged from the valley of the shadow of death, into the scene of glory and felicity beyond. Go, dearest Sarah; go before, and expect us, that are losing you, ere long to follow you. It will give an added attraction to a better world, to think that you are there.

Once more, my ever dear young friend, in time and through eternity, may the blessing of the Almighty rest on you.

J. F.

## IX.

*Saturday Night.*

I AM wishing, my dear Sarah, to add a very few lines merely as a post-script to the letter sent this morning. It was concluded somewhat more briefly than I wished, for fear of being too late for the expected means of conveyance. Reflection suggests that there should have been an observation or two more precisely directed to one particular view of that deficiency of consolation which has so much shaded and disquieted your spirit. Your expressions to me, and the observations made by your affectionate relatives, appear to convey that the chief point of your dissatisfaction is *this*—that your efforts and prayers have had but a partial success towards subduing and expelling what your conscience condemns in the habit of your mind, and in its occasional emotions and excitements. You are discouraged by feeling so much irritability accompanying the aggravated pressure of your disease, and by the consciousness of too little warmth of the religious affections, too little of the devotional sentiment toward the object worthy of infinite love, too little of the going forth of the soul in the lively apprehension, by faith, of invisible realities.

Now, my dearest Sarah, supposing all this to be the fact, even to the utmost degree that you at any moment painfully apprehend, there is still but one and the same resource—an *application to the infinite mercy and power of God*. All this, being just so much manifestation to you of what you cannot effect by your own will and strength, becomes but the more urgent a motive to persist in unremitted entreaty for both pardoning and sanctifying grace from heaven. The conscious *continuance* of the evil but imposes a still more resolved and earnest perseverance in application to the renewing and transforming spirit; and it is a trial of your faith in the all-sufficiency, the willingness, and the fidelity to promises, of that blessed Power. May that faith be sustained in strength to animate your application to God for his gracious influences upon you, even to the last hour that you shall remain on this side that glorious kingdom where faith is changed to sight.

My dear friend, in attempting to suggest consolatory thoughts, I would by no means adopt a language which should seem to *make light* of those conscious deficiencies of the due operation of religion on your mind, which have caused you so much pain, and sometimes cast a gloom over your hopes. But as to one of these—I mean the tendency to *irritable feelings*—I cannot but be fully of the opinion of your domestic friends, that you suffer it to distress your conscience very greatly too much. Not that you should consider it as *no* evil, or not an evil to be endeavored and prayed against, but it is an evil so *essentially physical*, it arises so immediately and almost wholly from the morbid, exhausted, and harassed state of your body, that assuredly you may safely regard it as a comparatively very small matter of accountableness to your conscience and



your merciful Judge, who knows and compassionates our frame, and remembers that, as to our mortal nature, we are but dust. I am persuaded that the most exalted piety would in such a physical state be no security against, not only the *tendency* to such feelings, but their actual excitement and recurrence in a considerable degree. Such piety will strive against them, will regret them when they have prevailed, but cannot constitute an exemption from a mighty law of our feeble nature, which makes the soul so much a partaker and victim of the sufferings of the body. The imperfect power, or rather the experienced impracticability, of repressing these irritations, with which the oppressed frame affects the mind, is a much less serious evil, and far less to be regretted, than a great deficiency of those feelings which are the great essential elements of internal religion—love to God, an earnest, grateful direction of the soul to Jesus Christ as the beneficent Saviour, the only medium of pardon and acceptance, and a solemn stretching forth of the thoughts and affections to the grand interest and scenes of the eternal world. Whatever defect you have been sensible of in these grand primary principles you will most justly have lamented, and may still regard with much deeper regret than that occasional irritable temperament which is mainly attributable to mere physical disorder, and which, my dear Sarah, you have, to all of us, appeared to regard with a greatly *disproportionate* measure of self-condemnation. The solicitous desire of your pious relatives has been that you might less expend your regrets on this, and feel them more directed to the imperfection which you were sensible of in the *greater* points of the Christian character.

So long, my dear friend, as you continue a subject of mortality, and of the discipline of your heavenly Father to prepare you to leave it, let your *chief* solicitude, and most importunate prayer, be directed to the object of attaining, through the agency of the almighty Spirit, more of the love of God shed abroad in your heart, a more affecting sense of the mercy of God in Jesus Christ, a more full and cordial reliance on the efficacy of the Saviour's mediation, and a more commanding impression on your mind of those stupendous realities which you are so very nearly approaching to behold. Oh, how striking to think, dearest Sarah, what a very, very short time hence you will be in the midst of their unveiled magnificence, and inspired, I trust, with heavenly rapture to find yourself there!

While you regret, and justly, every conscious deficiency of the great essential affections of religion, and the painful slowness of your advancement in them, you have still no cause to be discouraged. The *VITAL* principle of safety and hope is, that you *WOULD* be all that God approves; that you deplore every conscious deficiency in your soul; that you continue to supplicate the favor, the help, the blessed influences, of the God of all grace; that you strive to cast your soul wholly on the merits of Christ; that you desire and pray to be conformed to the divine image; that you earnestly long for all that constitutes a preparation for eternity.

Who, my dear Sarah, could have wrought all this in you but God? And he is certain to perfect his own work. But consider, that it is *never perfected on earth*; you are not to expect that it will [be]. To the very last we are sinners, who have nothing to rely upon but the divine mercy alone. Do not think of *making yourself worthy of that mercy, in order to be entitled to rely upon it*, and appropriate its consolations. With every imperfection, with every mortifying conviction of your inability to subdue your whole soul to God, *give it him as it is*. He will accept it, will train it to the last point of his own wise discipline, will ensure its having, in this introductory stage, the *essential* principle of its fitness for his presence, and in that presence will exalt and refine it to the perfection of purity and joy. Once again, my ever dear young friend,—my friend in time and through eternity—I commend you to his infinite power and mercy.

J. F.

---

 CORRECTION.

VOL. I., p. 12, "*ideas to reverberate*." This expression was probably suggested by a passage in Young, whose "Night Thoughts" he elsewhere terms "the most impressive moral poetry in existence."



"Full on ourselves descending in a line,  
Pleasure's bright beam is feeble in delight;  
Delight intense is taken by rebound;  
*Reverberated pleasures fire the breast*

NIGHT 2.

LIST OF MR. FOSTER'S CONTRIBUTIONS  
TO THE  
ECLECTIC REVIEW.

---

[\* \* The Articles marked with a † have been reprinted in the "Contributions," edited by  
Dr. Price. 2 vols., 8vo. 1844.]

---

1806.

- 1.† Carr's Stranger in Ireland. *November and December.*

1807.

- 2.† Forbes's Life of Beattie. *January and February.*  
3. Thoughts on Affectation. *February.*  
4. Ensor's Independent Man. *April and May.*  
5. Gambier on Moral Evidence. *May.*  
6. Fawcett's Hints on Education. *May.*  
7. Janson's Stranger in America. *June.*  
8.† Memoirs of Lord Kames. *July and August.*  
9. Collyer's Lectures on Scripture Facts. *October.*  
10. Carr's Tour through Holland. *November.*  
11.† Blair's Life. *December.*  
12. Grant's Letters from the Mountains. *December.*  
13. Hibernian Society's Report. *December.*

1808.

- 14.† Ritchie's Life of Hume. *January.*  
15. Barrow's Life of Lord Macartney. *February.*  
16.† Vindication of the Hindoos. *March.*  
17.† Pamphlets on India. *May.*  
18. Stockdale on Poets. *May.*  
19. Edwards's Narrative. *June.*  
20. Cordiner's Ceylon. *July and August.*  
21.† Fox's Historical Work. *September.*  
22.† Macdiarmid's British Statesmen. *October and November.*  
23.† Life of Sir Thomas More. *December.*

24. Midas. *December.*  
 25.† Cunningham on Christianity in India. *December.*

## 1809.

- 26.† Paley's Sermons. *January.*  
 27. Gass's Expedition. *February.*  
 28. Buchanan Prize Sermons. *February and March.*  
 29. Memoirs of an American Lady. *February.*  
 30.† Southey's Chronicle of the Cid. *March.*  
 31. Carr's Caledonian Sketches. *April.*  
 32. Account of Jamaica. *April.*  
 33.† Thomas's Letters on the Church, and a Layman's  
 34.† Answer. *April.*  
 35.† Scott Waring's Pamphlet. *May.*  
 36.† Sydney Smith's Sermons. *May and June.*  
 37.† Meadley's Life of Paley. *June.*  
 38.† Rose on Fox's History. *July.*  
 39. Lord Valentia's Travels. *August, September, October.*  
 40. Ancient Indian Literature. *September.*  
 41. Walker's Essays. *October.*  
 42.† Plumptre's Discourses on the Stage. *November.*  
 43. Lewis and Clarke's Travels. *November.*  
 44.† Chatfield's Historical Review of Hindostan. *December.*  
 45.† Characters of Fox. *December.*  
 46. Erskine's Speech on Cruelty to Animals. *December.*

## 1810.

- 47.† Edgeworth's Essays on Professional Education. *January and February.*  
 48.† Pearson on Propagating Christianity in Asia. *February.*  
 49. Tennant's Indian Recreations. *March.*  
 50. Robinson's More's Utopia. *April.*  
 51.† Wordsworth's Ecclesiastical Biography. *May.*  
 52. Aikin's Life of Huet. *June.*  
 53. Semple's Journey through Spain. *June.*  
 54. Report of the African Institution. *July.*  
 55. Clarke's Travels, Part I. *August.*  
 56.† Ramayuna, Vol. I. *September.*  
 57.† Edgeworth's Tales. *October.*  
 58.† Windham's Speech on Cruelty to Animals. *November.*  
 59.† Cottle's Fall of Cambria. *December.*

## 1811.

60. Travels of Abu Taleb. *January.*  
 61. Bourdon's Materials for Thinking. *January.*

- 62. Collyer's Lecture on Prophecy. *February.*
- 63.† Southey's Curse of Kehama. *March and April.*
- 64. Pike's Travels in North America. *April.*
- 65. Kirkpatrick's Nepaul. *May and June.*
- 66. Dudley's Metamorphosis of Sona. *May.*
- 67. Von Sack's Voyage to Surinam. *June.*
- 68.† Buchanan's Christian Researches. *July and August.*
- 69.† Kirkpatrick's Letters of Tippoo Sultan. *July.*
- 70. Hyatt's Sermons. *July.*
- 71. Carr's Travels in Spain. *August and September.*
- 72. Foot's Life of Murphy. *September.*
- 73.† Coleridge's Friend. *October.*
- 74. Ramayuna, Vol. II. *November.*
- 75. Report of the African Institution. *November.*
- 76. Hervey's Letters. *November.*
- 77.† Heywood's Vindication of Fox's History. *December.*

## 1812.

- 78. Morier's Journey through Persia. *February and March.*
- 79.† Grant's Superstitions of the Highlanders. *February.*
- 80.† Aikin's Lives of Selden and Usher. *February.*
- 81.† Moor's Hindu Infanticide. *April.*
- 82.† Elgin's Pursuits in Greece. *April.*
- 83. Chandler's Life of Waynflete. *April.*
- 84.† Jesse's Sermons. *April.*
- 85. Foote's Vindication. *May.*
- 86. Plumtre's Narrative. *May.*
- 87. Gaisford's Essay on the Slave Trade. *May.*
- 88. Whitaker's Life of Radcliffe. *May.*
- 89. Wilmot's Life of Hough. *May.*
- 90. Hooker's Tour through Iceland. *June.*
- 91. Semple's Sketch of the Caraccas. *July.*
- 92. Biographie Moderne. *July.*
- 93.† Mudford's Life of Cumberland. *August.*
- 94.† Chateaubriand's Martyrs. *September.*
- 95. Drake's Gleaner. *November.*
- 96. Gunn's Sermons. *November.*
- 97.† Whitefield's Life. *December.*
- 98. Description of Terracottas. *December.*

## 1813.

- 99.† Woodfall's Junius. *February and April.*
- 100.† Grattan's Speeches. *February.*
- 101.† Pilgrimage of Theophilus. *March.*
- 102.† Hall's Address on the East India Charter. *April.*

- 103. Calamities of Authors. *May.*
- 104. Zollikofer's Sermons. *May.*
- 105.† Galt's Life of Wolsey. *June.*
- 106. Chateaubriand's Beauties of Christianity. *July.*
- 107. Stoddard's Louisiana. *August.*
- 108. Gamble's View of Ireland. *September.*
- 109.† Stephens's Memoirs of Horne Tooke. *September and October.*
- 110. Forsyth's Remarks on Italy. *November.*

## 1814.

- 111. Stanfield's Biography. *February.*
- 112. Bodleian Letters. *February.*
- 113. Semple's Tour to Hamburg. *February.*
- 114.† A New Directory for Nonconformist Churches. *March.*
- 115. Dyer's Poetics. *April.*
- 116.† Philosophy of Nature. *May.*
- 117. Evans's Ponderer. *May.*
- 118. Wilberforce on India. *May.*
- 119. Krusenstern's Voyage round the World. *June.*
- 120. Memoirs of a Celebrated Character. *September.*
- 121. Life of Cardinal Ximenes. *October.*
- 122. Penn's Bioscope. *October.*
- 123. Forbes's Oriental Memoirs. *October, November, December.*
- 124. Dyer's Cambridge. *November.*
- 125. Memoir of the Queen of Etruria. *December.*

## 1815.

- 126.† Butler's Life of l'Hôpital. *February.*
- 127. Ramond's Travels in the Pyrenees. *February.*
- 128. Salt's Travels in Abyssinia. *March and April.*
- 129. Eighth Report of the African Institution. *March.*
- 130. Wathen's Voyage to Madras. *May.*
- 131. Alpine Sketches. *June.*
- 132. Lamotte's Travels in Norway. *July.*
- 133. Campbell's Travels in Africa. *August.*
- 134. Park's Mission to the Interior of Africa. *September.*
- 135. Dodworth's See of Salisbury. *November.*
- 136. Hobbhouse's Journey through Albania. *December.*

## 1816.

- 137. Lewis and Clarke's Travels in America. *February.*
- 138.† Curran's Speeches. *February.*
- 139. Klaproth's Travels in Caucasus. *April.*
- 140. Britton's Cathedral Antiquities. *May.*
- 141. Travels of Ali Bey. *June.*

- 142. Clarke's Travels. *July and September.*
- 143. Description of Ancient Marbles. *July.*
- 144. Hoare's South Wiltshire. *August.*
- 145. Adam's Narrative. *September.*
- 146. Memoirs of Madame De La Rochejaquelein. *November.*
- 147. Daniell's Oriental Scenery. *November.*
- 148. Parkyn's Monastic Remains. *December.*
- 149. Denon's Egypt. *December.*

## 1817.

- 150. Galt's Life of West. *January.*
- 151. Memoirs of Four Hindoos. *January.*
- 152. Koster's Travels. *February.*
- 153.† Jeremy Taylor's Contemplations. *February.*
- 154. Legh's Travels in Egypt. *March.*
- 155. Sketches of India. *April.*
- 156. Holland's Travels. *April.*
- 157. Johns on the Burning of Widows. *May.*
- 158. Antiquities of Attica. *May.*
- 159.† Chalmers's Astronomical Discourses. *September, October, and November.*

## 1818.

- 160.† Ryland's Life of Fuller. *February.*
- 161. Daniell's Voyage round Great Britain. *April and May.*
- 162.† Franklin's Correspondence. *May.*
- 163. Henderson's Iceland. *July, August, and September.*
- 164. Memoirs of Fawcett, jun. *August.*
- 165. Walter Scott's Border Antiquities. *October.*
- 166. Congo Expedition. *November.*

## 1819.

- 167. Flinders's Terra Australis. *April.*
- 168. Clarke's Travels. *June.*
- 169. Rhodes's Peak Scenery. *June.*
- 170. Fitzclarence's Journal. *July.*
- 171.† Dr. Fawcett's Life. *August.*
- 172. Wild's Lincoln Cathedral. *August.*
- 173. Egede's Greenland. *August.*
- 174. Hamilton's Nepaul. *September.*

## 1820.

- 175. Allason's Antiquities of Pola. *January.*
- 176. Baron Von Gerning's Tour along the Rhine. *July.*

177. Raffles's Java. *August.*  
178. Gell's Pompeiana. *September.*

1828.

- 179.† Ryland's Pastoral Memorials. *December.*

1837.

- 180.† Cottle's Coleridge. *August.*  
181.† Lane's Egyptians. *October.*

1838.

- 182.† Dix's Life of Chatterton. *May.*  
183. Turner's Description of England and Wales. *June.*  
184. What Cheer? or Roger Williams in Banishment. *July.*

1839.

185. Polack's New Zealand. *July.*

*Note.*—The *scientific* observations in the review of *Walker's Essays*, No. 41, were not written by Mr. Foster, but (if the Editor has not been misinformed) by Dr. O. Gregory.



## INDEX.

---

### A.

ANDERSON, Rev. W. ii. 53, 124,  
138, 139, 155.  
Arnold, Dr. i. 8; ii. 110, 251.  
"Autumn Dream," Mr. Sheppard's,  
ii. 240.

### B.

Ballot, ii. 178, 187, 252.  
Baxter, i. 211, 287; ii. 34, 41.  
Beattie, Dr. i. 221.  
Bible Society, i. 116; ii. 2.  
Bolingbroke, i. 207.  
British Review, ii. 22.  
Brougham, ii. 43, 77.  
Brucker, ii. 153.  
Buchanan, G. i. 138.  
Buonaparte, i. 142, 284.  
Burke, i. 118, 129.

### C.

Canning, ii. 83, 100.  
Carey, Dr. ii. 104, 105, 177.  
Carpenter, Dr. ii. 142, 157.  
Catholic Emancipation, ii. 72, 84,  
100.  
Chalmers, Dr. ii. 16, 121.  
Chartists, ii. 202, 224, 225.  
Chatham, Lord, i. 141.  
Chronicle, Morning, ii. 194, 197,  
302.  
Church Establishment, i. 246; ii. 6,  
74, 151, 163, 192, 248, 300.  
Church Rates, ii. 252.  
Clergy, Non-resident, ii. 146.  
Evangelical, i. 249; ii. 7, 175, 293.  
Cobbett, i. 262, 273, 283.

Coleridge, i. 93, 148, 226, 228, 229,  
269, 274, 290; ii. 275, 321.  
Coles, Rev. T. i. 93; ii. 221.  
Commons, House of, ii. 77, 182,  
206.  
Conference, Methodist, ii. 92.  
Constitution, English, ii. 74, 127.  
Crabbe, i. 273.  
Curran, i. 189.

### D.

Durfee, Judge, ii. 212.  
Dryden, ii. 23.

### E.

Eclectic Review, i. 184, 246; ii.  
144.  
Edinburgh Review, i. 224, 225, 259.  
Education, National, ii. 5, 226, 245.  
Education, Self, i. 139, 197.  
Edwards, Jonathan, i. 56.

### F.

Fawcett, Dr. i. 6, 50; ii. 252.  
Fawcett, Rev. John, i. 209; ii. 145,  
210.  
FOSTER, JOHN, Birth and boyhood,  
i. 2. Juvenile characteristics,  
3-5. Baptism and removal to  
Brearley Hall, 6. To Bristol, 8.  
Visits Newcastle-on-Tyne, 23.  
Dublin, 24. Return to Yorkshire,  
31. Opinions on ecclesiastical  
and political institutions, 41-44.  
Removal to Chichester, 45. Vi-  
sits Battersea, 46. Settles at  
Downend, 48. Visits Yorkshire,

49. Literary projects. Essay on the Greatness of man, 101. Journal, 108. Letters on the Metropolis, 156-175. Removal to Frome, 176. Publication of the Essays, 179. Resigns the pastorship at Frome, 187. Becomes a stated contributor to the Eclectic Review, 188. Marriage and settlement at Bourton, 242. Engages in village preaching, 248. Birth of his son, 249. Death of his parents, 252. Domestic habits, 252-255. Removal to Downend, 257. Discourse on missions. Essay on the evils of Popular Ignorance, ii. 3. Lectures, 9. Essay to Doddridge's Rise and Progress of Religion, 11. Son's illness and death, 13-15. Introductory observations to Dr. Marshman's statement, 66. Observations on Mr. Hall as a preacher, 71. Sanguine expectations from the Reform Bill, 77. Illness and death of Mrs Foster, 129. Decease of Mr. Anderson, 138. Mr. Hughes, 141. Final revision of the Essays. Letters on the Church and the Ballot, 144. Decease of his brother and Mr. Fawcett, 145. Visit to Bourton, 219. Death of Mr. Coles, 221. Visit to London, 222. Attack of bronchitis, 222. Last visit to Bourton, 223. Final illness, 226. Death, 232.

Fox, i. 205, 259, 266.

## G.

Gibbon, i. 201, 211.  
 Gisborne, ii. 243.  
 Grattan, i. 189; ii. 123.  
 Greaves, Mr. ii. 215.

## H.

Hall, Robert, i. 9, 19, 50, 93, 144,

176, 183, 187, 199, 205, 244, 251, 257, 266, 273, 274, 279, 306; ii. 11, 51, 54, 70, 92, 97, 119, 125, 293, 316, 317, 319.  
 Hamilton's, Campi Phlegræi, ii. 17, 18.  
 Henry, Philip, ii. 82.  
 Hooker, i. 267.  
 Howe, i. 268; ii. 18.  
 Hughes, Rev. Joseph, i. 9, 10, 15, 24, 37, 41, 49, 52, 59, 67, 122, 150, 190, 181, 244, 257, 263; ii. 3-8, 141, 161.

## I.

Intermediate State, ii. 234, 236.  
 Ireland, i. 25, 189; ii. 73, 84, 100, 107, 125, 151, 199, 274, 299.

## J.

Johnson, Dr. i. 11, 14, 129, 224.

## K.

Kinghorne, Rev. J. i. 22.

## L.

Langdon, Rev. T. i. 50.  
 League, Anti-Corn-Law, ii. 295, 299.  
 Leslie, i. 211.  
 Luther, ii. 213.

## M.

Marshman, Dr. ii. 66, 103. (Vide Serampore.)  
 Methodists, i. 288; ii. 36, 46, 50, 92, 226, 245.  
 Millennium, ii. 256.  
 Milton, i. 111, 149, 184, 206.  
 Monuments, ii. 28, 31.  
 More, Mrs. H. i. 11, 21, 274; ii. 173, 191.

## N.

Necessity, i. 56, 62, 64, 120.  
 Newton, Rev. J. i. 120.

## O.

O'Connell, ii. 123, 195, 203, 247,  
 260.  
 Okely, Dr. ii. 124.  
 Ordination, Dissenting, ii. 71.

## P.

Paley, i. 61; ii. 28.  
 Pascal, i. 207, 237, 241; ii. 42,  
 43.  
 Peel, Sir R., ii. 75, 295.  
 Plato, ii. 308.  
 Poland, ii. 76, 127.  
 Punishment, Future, i. 27, 67; ii.  
 262, 290.

## R.

Rammohunroy, ii. 142, 157.  
 Ramsay, Allan, i. 126.  
 Reform-bill, ii. 75-80, 128, 262.  
 Revolution, French, i. 40, 48, 59,  
 274; ii. 126, 288.  
 Rousseau, i. 77.  
 Ryland, Dr. i. 91, 185; ii. 45, 305.

## S.

Serampore Missionaries, i. 282,  
 284, 285; ii. 66-69, 90, 95, 101.  
 Scotland, Church of, ii. 250, 300.  
 Scott, Walter, ii. 41, 125, 229.  
 Shakspeare, i. 137, 184, 234.  
 Snowdon, i. 250.  
 Socialists, ii. 270.  
 Southey, i. 226, 274, 293; ii. 336.  
 Stanley, Lord, ii. 260.  
 Suffrage, Universal, ii. 202, 224.  
 Swift, ii. 125.

## T.

Taylor, Isaac, ii. 44, 243, 247.  
 Taylor, Jeremy, i. 267, 269; ii.  
 322.  
 Thornbury Church, i. 150.  
 Tooke, Horne, i. 181, 205  
 Tracts, Oxford, ii. 144, 247.

## W.

Wade, Mr. ii. 202, 275.  
 Wakefield, i. 260.  
 Walker, i. 260.  
 Watts, Dr. i. 64, 186; ii. 269.  
 Wesley, i. 238; 40.  
 Wilberforce, i. 218; ii. 7, 174, 301.  
 Woollett, ii. 273.







**UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY  
BERKELEY**

**Return to desk from which borrowed.**

**This book is DUE on the last date stamped below.**

21

NOV 18 '953 LU

REC CIR FEB 1 1959

8

6

[illegible]

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY

**YC147777**



